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Volume 36, Number 1

JANUARY 1973

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THE COVER:

Once a thriving company town for copper mining, Jerome has survived five devastating fires and today is a picturesque community catering to artists and tourists. The Arizona town is perched on the side of a steep mountain a short distance east of Prescott. Photo by David Muench, Santa Barbara, California.

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A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

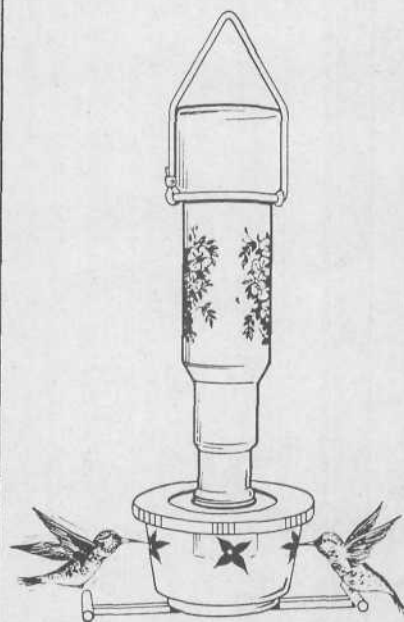
THIS MONTH'S column is submitted by historian and author, Tom G. Murray, and is a moving tribute to the passing of an old prospector:

The Duke is gone. In the Lone Pine Hospital on September 27, 1972, John Ward (Buck) Johnston, "The Duke of Muddy Waters" passed on to the big camp in the sky. Cy Babcock, "The Wildrose Kid" named him. Cy told me, "The first time I saw Buck was right after a summer cloud-burst when he arrived at my Wildrose Station in Death Valley. Buck was drenched but despite his rainy look he was smiles all over. I told him that anyone that went through hell and high water and still could smile must be "The Duke of Muddy Waters."

The Duke, as far as my knowledge, outside of ageless Harry Briggs, is the last of the famous Death Valley Miners who became a legend in their own lifetime. When the Duke passed to the mysterious range beyond the clouds he joined other famous western characters who in their two-fisted lives pitted themselves against Nature's most barren challenge. In memory I have a vision of the Duke sitting by a big fire in the big camp in the sky, circled by others of his vanishing breed; Death Valley Scotty, Ted Lang, Shorty Harris, Silent George, Seldom Seen Slim, the Wildrose Kid and a thousand others of their colorful image. The grand Duke is dead—the desert trails will no longer feel his friendly footsteps or drink in the wine of his merry laughter. Farewell, Duke of the sagebrush, of the sand and wild winds, of the desert storms and flaming sunsets and of all that made life and the mystery of the desert so beautiful. Farewell Duke of Muddy Waters.

The Duke was buried in Trona, Calif. Oct. 2, 1972 with full military honors.

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Book Reviews

by Jack Pepper

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GUIDEBOOK TO THE COLORADO DESERT OF CALIFORNIA

By
Choral Pepper



There are two major deserts in Southern California. The Mojave Desert — sometimes called the High Desert — encompasses most of San Bernardino County on the south to the northern section of Kern County, and from the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the Nevada border.

The Colorado Desert lies below the Mojave and extends into Mexico. It includes the Anza-Borrego desert area on the west and on the east is bordered by the Arizona state line. Russ Leadabrand's popular *Guidebook to the Mojave Desert of California* covers the High Desert area.

Now there is another excellent guidebook by the same publishers (Ward Ritchie Press) on the Colorado Desert written by Choral Pepper.

During her six years as editor of *Desert Magazine*, the author not only edited manuscripts about the desert, but also explored and wrote numerous articles about the people and places of this vast area which is rich in history and beauty.

Combining the information gleaned from her past experiences with her recent travel in preparation for writing the book, she has presented a comprehensive and accurate guide to the Colorado Desert.

Although basically for passenger cars, the guide also describes areas of interest for four-wheel-drivers.

In addition to describing places of interest for Southern California travelers, the author also presents the history of the area and intrigues the reader with tales of lost bonanzas, prehistoric Indian designs (such as the giant intaglios near Blythe), old mining camps and intimate glimpses

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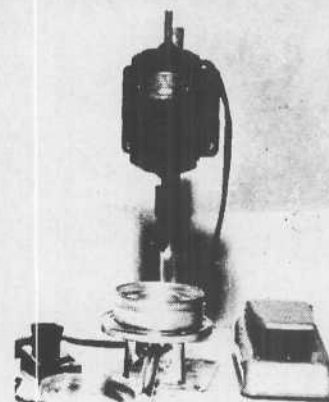
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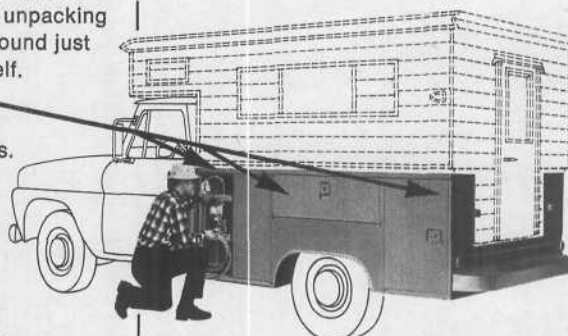
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into the lives of old-timers such as Steve Ragsdale.

This is a well-written book which will be of interest to anyone traveling through the Colorado Desert, whether as a casual visitor or a veteran explorer. Slick paperback, illustrated, 128 pages, \$1.95.

COINSHOOTING

How and Where
To Do It

By

H. Glenn Carson



Coinshooting is a fairly widely used term for the hunting of coins with a metal detector. One could call it coin hunting, treasure hunting, looking for coins, bottle-cap and aluminum foil collecting, or any number of terms.

Actually it is getting out into the open, using one's head—and metal detector—and trying to find coins and other items lost by people over the years.

"When done right coinshooting is an interesting, healthful, and harmful-to-nobody hobby," the author states. "When done in the wrong way it can make people angry, as it should. The purpose of this book is to present tips and 'tricks' on coinshooting, to point out the various places where coinshooters have a chance of success, and suggestions for improving their coinshooting."

A veteran "coinshooter", the author has presented a collection of facts and information which will be helpful to both veteran and novice seekers. Anyone who owns a metal detector will find this book will make their hobby easier, more interesting—and maybe more profitable. Paperback, illustrated, 58 pages, \$2.50.

(Editor's Note: Although the author uses certain metal detectors in his photos and lists a few distributors, as he states, these are not the only good detectors or only outlets. There are many other manufacturers and models of excellent quality not presented in the book for the simple reason the author could not use every type of detectors.)

EXPLORING CALIFORNIA FOLKLORE

By

Russ Leadabrand



Russ Leadabrand was born in California's San Joaquin Valley and started his writing career at an early age. He is the author of ten popular guidebooks to areas of interest in Southern California. During the years while gathering material for these travel guides he evidently collected anecdotes, folklore and legends which did not fit the format of his previous books.

He has taken this material and presented it in his latest book which is subtitled "True tales, tall tales and legends for travelers through the Golden State."

Although he has divided the book into geological sections which include San Joaquin Valley, The Mountains, The Coast and The Desert, it is not a travel guide, but rather a collection of his personal experiences and observations on what is happening to Southern California today.

It is an easy to read, fast moving book about people and places which have not been covered by either Leadabrand or other authors. Slick paperback, artist sketches, 110 pages, \$1.95.

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DESERT's Editor Seeks New Horizons

JACK PEPPER, associated with DESERT Magazine for the past nine years, is resigning his position as editor to devote full time to writing.

Jack and I have been close friends for many years and since 1968, when I became publisher and co-owner of the magazine, our friendship has flourished along with our relationship as business partners. I am proud to state that, as a result of our combined efforts, DESERT has increased in circulation, color content and both regional and national advertising.

In informing me of his decision to "retire" as editor, Jack explained that he "had a couple of unfinished books under my belt" which he could not finish as long as he was tied down to an editor's desk.

"Since first starting in the newspaper business when I was 21, I have been hitting deadlines," he told me. "I have found you cannot meet deadlines, edit other writer's material and do creative writing at the same time. It is a difficult decision to make, but I have decided now is the right time to seek new horizons."

Jack's "horizons" will continue to be in the mountain and desert areas of the

by
**Bill
Knyvett**

Southwest. With his completely equipped four-wheel-drive rig and travel trailer he will be seen throughout the west garnering material for his books and free-lance material. He will assume the position of Special Feature Editor for DESERT Magazine and thus the readers, who have followed his adventures and explorations in these pages, will continue to have "their" magazine flavored with a dash of Pepper.

"As an active participant in DESERT Magazine for the past nine years," Jack said, "it has been my great privilege and pleasure to have met and helped writers and photographers whose articles have so enhanced the pages of our publication. I know these writers and photographers—and new ones—will continue to contribute their talents, which is why DESERT will always be a vibrant and active voice throughout the Southwest.

"I also want to thank all of the faithful readers whose keen interest in our publication and the desert areas has made DESERT Magazine the success it is today. It

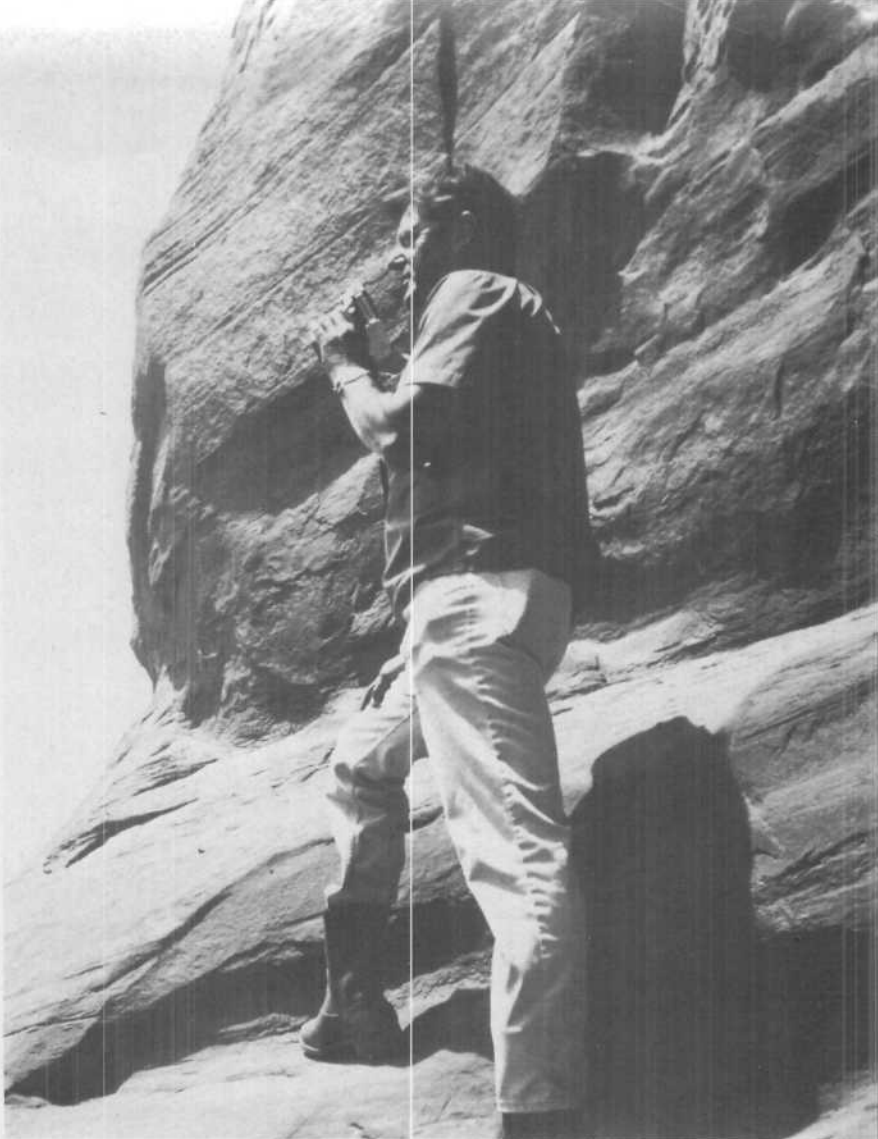
is to these writers, photographers and readers, I wish to express my thanks for sharing with me a rewarding nine years."

Jack's career as a journalist spans 15 years with the New York World Telegram, Oklahoma City Times and the San Diego Journal (after World War II). The war years found Jack in the Marine Corps, with 2½ years overseas. He participated in the invasions of Tarawa, Saipan and Tinian as a Marine Corps Combat Correspondent.

Immediately prior to his purchase of the magazine in 1963, he was in charge of the Las Vegas News Bureau for nine years and headed up his own public relations firm.

With a track record like that it seems to me that Jack just might have more than "a couple" of books under his belt.

In purchasing Jack's interest in the magazine and assuming the position of Publisher-Editor, I know that all the readers will join me in wishing him the greatest success in his new endeavors. □



Jack Pepper . . . to seek new horizons

Gem Fields of Lavic Valley

by
**Mary
Frances
Strong**

**Photos
by
Jerry
Strong**

SOME OF the finest gem cutting material in the United States has been found on the alluvial plains of Lavic Valley in San Bernardino County, California. Brilliantly-colored jasper has combined with chalcedony to produce beautifully patterned moss, lace, plume and flame jasp-agate known as "Lavic Jasper."

Collecting has occurred in Lavic Valley for nearly five decades. However, during the past two years persistent reports that the area was worked out had reached my desk. I found this hard to believe since alluvial deposit such as this one tend to have new material constantly exposed by erosion.

Lavic gem field not only produces fine material but it is easy to reach. It provides an excellent area for new collectors who haven't, as yet, invested

in recreational vehicles. The family car can readily be taken into this region. With this in mind, Jerry and I decided to check out the Lavic area during our annual spring safari on the Mojave Desert.

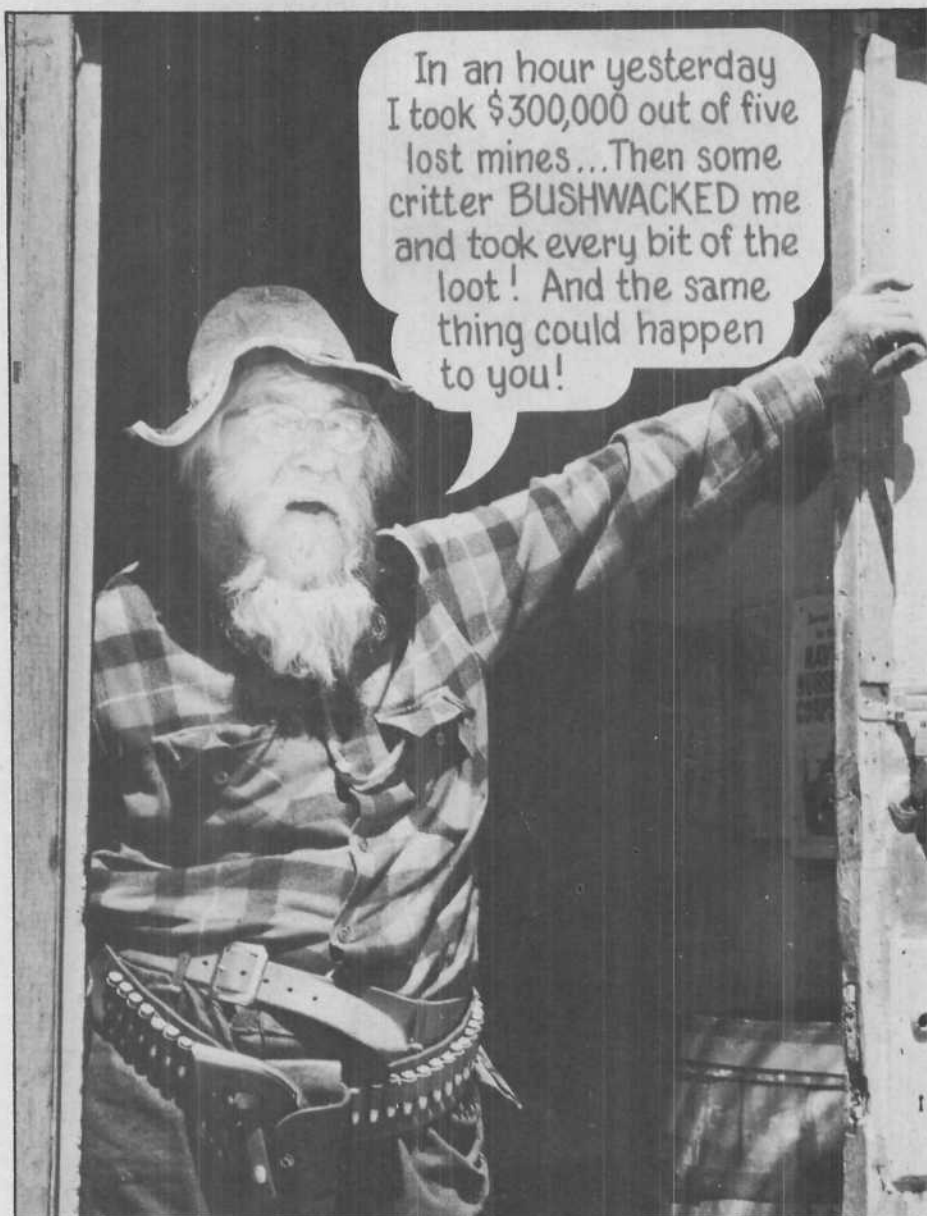
The weather gods had smiled kindly and there was a touch of summer in the air as we headed east from Barstow on Interstate Highway 40. We traveled along the edge of the Newberry Mountains, crossed the salt-encrusted flats of Troy Dry Lake, entered the lava flow from Pisgah Crater, then climbed the alluvial plain of the Southern Cady Mountains. It seemed only a short time before we had covered the 50 miles to Ludlow and were taking the off ramp giving access to old Highway 66.

This new freeway (a section of which is not yet completed) provides fast travel



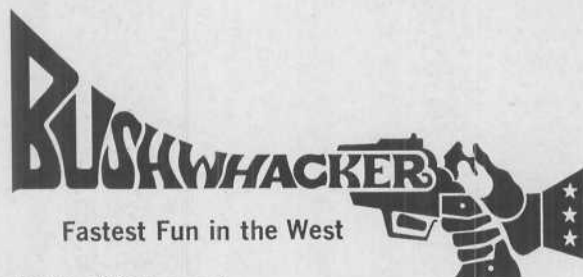


Good material (above, left) is found at the edge of the Pisgah Crater lava flow. There are excellent camping spots (left) on the alluvial plain in the collecting area. Fine cutting material (above) can be found in the exposed ash beds. The author (below) and her dog "Lobo" examine a plume agate specimen.



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across the desert between Barstow and Needles. Though it denies turnoffs to the many gem collecting areas along the route, they may be reached by using the major ramps and the old highway.

From Ludlow, we back-tracked 8.3 miles to a freeway overcrossing (see map for detailed mileages). Then, leaving the pavement we headed south via a dirt road to the railroad crossing. Here, we saw a change. The shop buildings and home which had comprised Lavic Siding had all been removed.

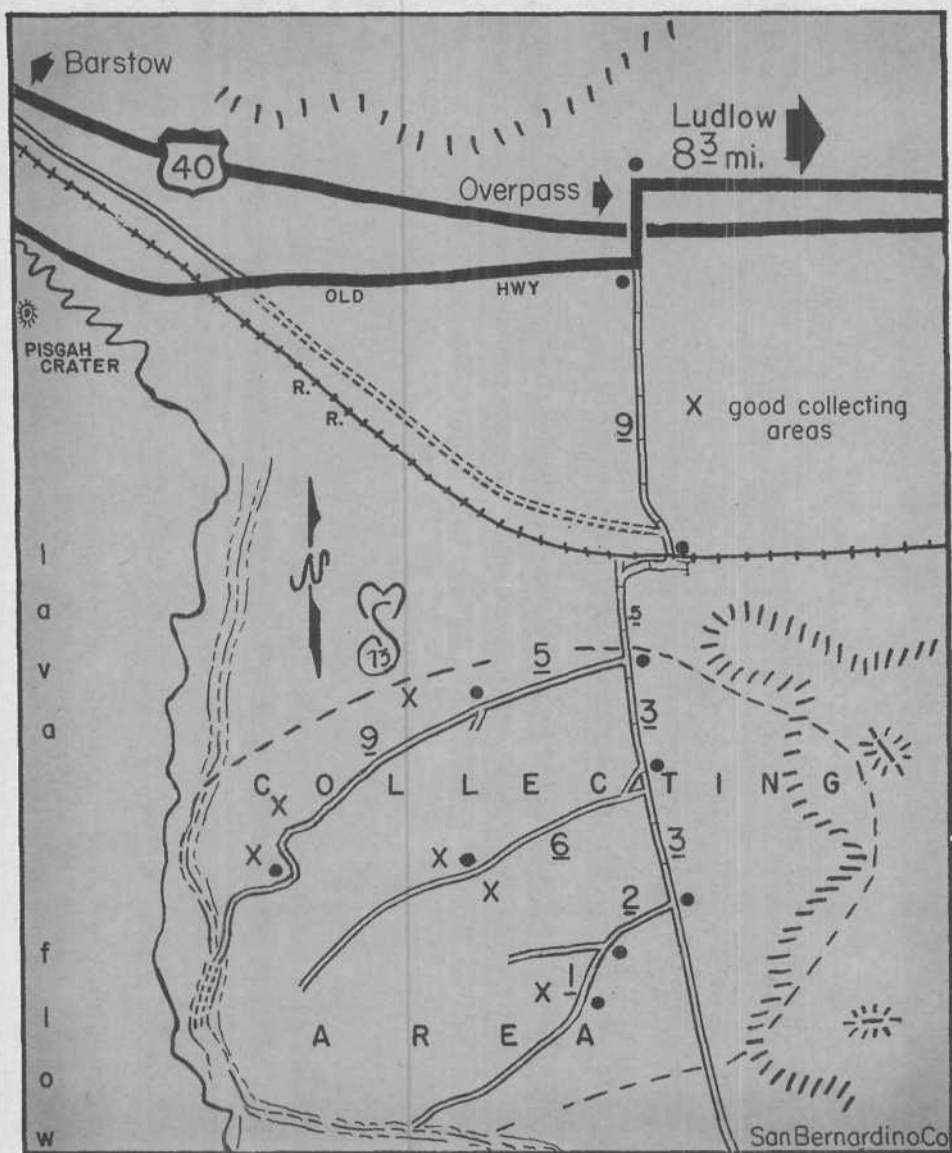
Crossing the tracks, we turned right and in a short distance turned left. Before us lay Lavic Valley with the bulwark of the Bullion Mountains forming its southern border. To the west, the classic cinder cone of Pisgah Crater dominated the skyline with the large mass of its lava flow readily discernible. A close examination of the lava shows it to be black basalt and of such rough and ropy texture it is easy to imagine its flowing down the valley.

The Lavic area and I are old friends, as I have been collecting here for nearly 25 years. I have always been able to find some gem quality material and, somehow, I felt secure with the knowledge that "Lavic wouldn't let me down".

We parked our trailer a short distance from the main road along the first dirt tracks leading into the collecting area. The ground was generously sprinkled with specimens of brightly-colored jasper and Jerry found a chunk of "lace carnelian" when he leveled the trailer. It was blood-red jasper interwoven with blue chalcedony to form a lace-like pattern.

Collecting around the vicinity of our camp, we picked up several good specimens. Later, we followed the tracks west to the lava flow and found the dark badjas covered with larger specimens of colorful material. I had been right—there was plenty of good jasper-agate to be collected—now, and in the years to come. However, as yet, Lavic Valley has not been included as one of the multiple-use areas in the Desert Management Program the Bureau of Land Management has underway. It is possible that eventually rock collecting may not be permitted here.

By late afternoon, the Mojave Zephyr (what we desert dwellers call the strong wind) began to come up. It rocked the trailer gently—though at times can be strong enough to be dangerous—and sleep



came easily.

Morning found a cold wind blowing and a mackerel sky warned of unsettled weather to come. We explored two other trails through the collecting area and found good material available. It only requires some walking, looking and careful selection to obtain specimens of cutting quality.

We drove south on the graded road toward Lavic Dry Lake hoping the military hadn't included the old Kenton Mill site within its boundary. A fence and sign proclaimed it had.

The Kenton mill was built on the edge of Lavic Dry Lake in the 1890s to process the ore from the Tip Top Silver Mine.

About 70,000 ounces of silver had been produced when a shaft hit a high-grade copper deposit. There is no record of the copper production—probably because all of the ore was shipped to Swansea, Wales.

Stopping for a coffee break, I pointed out to Jerry the road into the Bullion Mountains which leads to the finest plume-agate bed on the Mojave Desert. This deposit is within the military reservation but until recent years limited collection was allowed. Due to large amounts of unexploded ammunition, the locale is permanently closed.

Returning to camp we met Ben and Barbara Netto and Des and Idele Worth from the Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Society. They were spending a week visiting several desert collecting areas. Though long-time rockhounds, this was their first visit to Lavic and they were well-pleased with the mineral they had found.

It was with reluctance that we broke camp and continued out trip. However, we felt a sense of satisfaction in that, though our beloved desert can be a fickle mistress, she has given us at Lavic a gem field that many generations may enjoy.

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PRAIRIE DOGS... DESERT MERRY MAKERS

by
K. L. Boynton

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VAST and empty stretch the arid plains of the great West—a land of endless sandy-hued distances, of purple shadows cast by high-riding clouds that come and go swiftly, leaving a blazing sky. A place of great beauty, but infinitely lonely, for, as far as the eye can see, there is no sign of life. And, as the hours go by, the traveler begins to grow uneasy, feeling strangely small in a very big and a very lonesome place.

And then—a gladsome sight greets his eye! There's life ahead and plenty of it, for he's coming upon a prairie dog village. Its plump, sand-colored citizens are everywhere to be seen; feeding, frolics about their mound homes, and the great arid stretches that looked so forbidding

before, now seem warm and friendly. But one of the fat little residents spots the traveler and gives a sharp yap of warning. There's an instant scurry and dash, a popping into holes, and all the prairie dogs vanish as if by magic. The deserted land is empty once more.

But not for long! The first cautious be-whiskered nose poked out of a burrow, the first bright eye that determines all is safe assures the others, and the scene comes to life anew. All is bustle and activity again in prairie dog town, and the traveler goes his way with a lightened heart, cheered no end by these droll and potbellied members of the squirrel tribe who lead the merry life in the most inhospitable of lands.

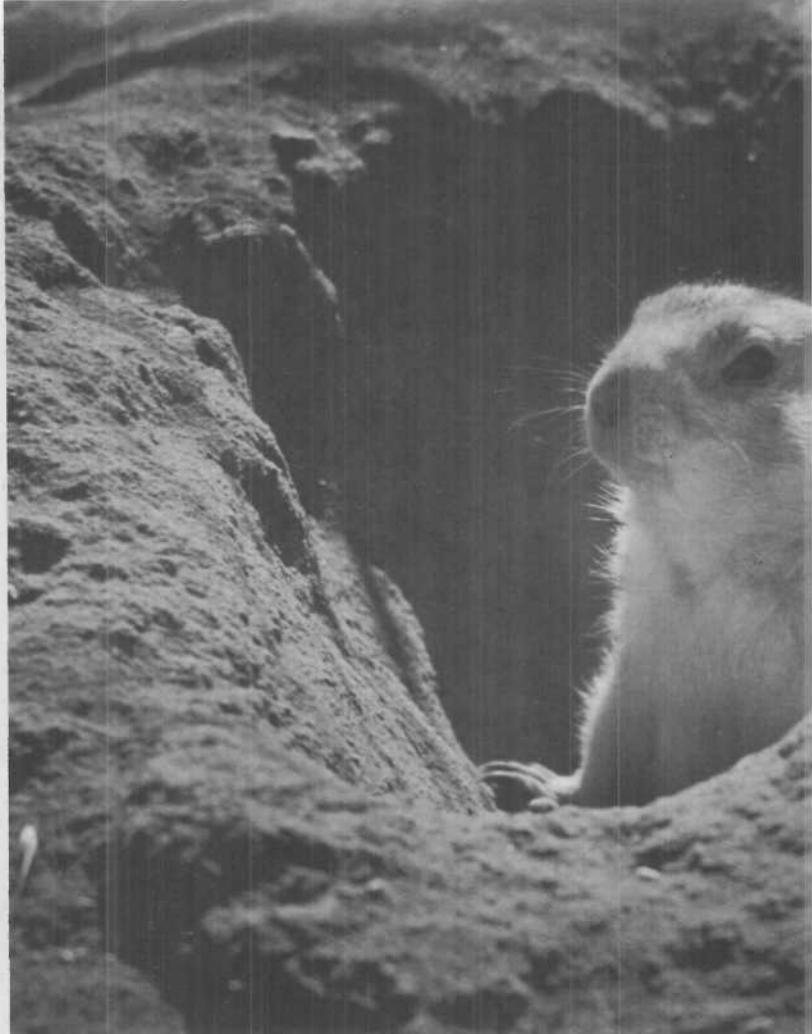
To make things even nicer, prairie dogs, it seems, come in two main styles: one with white hairs adorning their short tails, and the other with black hairs for tail trim. As to be expected, there are variations within each group, depending on where the animals reside, the desertly Zunis, for example, favoring a more cinnamon coat hue than other white tails, as do the Arizonas, which are more brightly colored than typical tails.

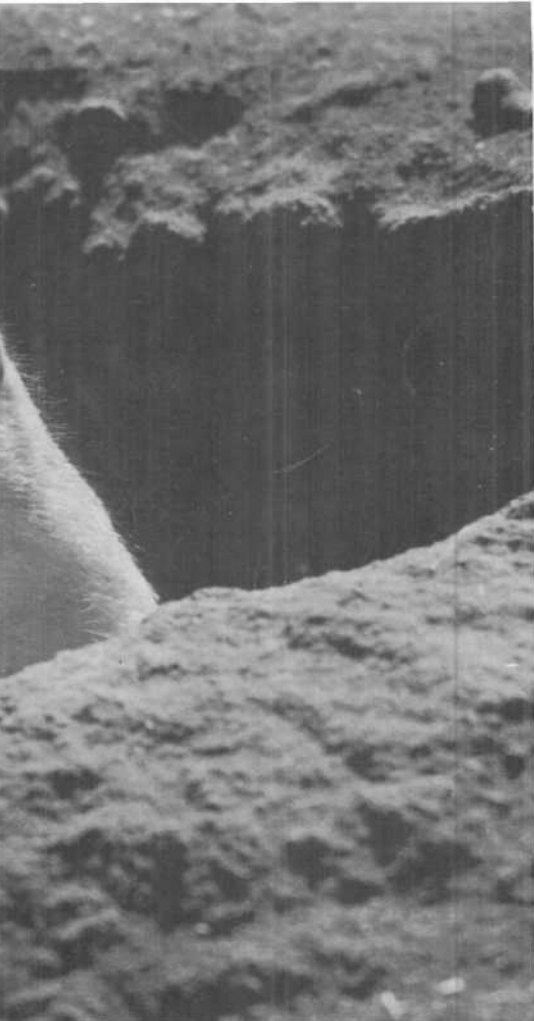
Regardless of sartorial preferences,

however, prairie dogs of both groups are basically much the same—fat, cheerful, industrious and sociably inclined. True, the black tails seem to be more closely knit in social organization, maybe because they live usually in flatter, more open country, where danger is heightened; the upland white tails having fewer problems in their rougher terrain. But black tail or white tail, prairie dogs vote unanimously for a good burrow, vegetation for food and lots of their own kind residing nearby for socializing and mutual protection, as their ideal home condition.

Dug with his own fair paws, the burrow of the prairie dog is his home and fortress—a place for comfortable living and a fine refuge from danger. It is also a matter of interest and current surprise to scientists who are just now waking up to the fact that this pudgy little character obviously knows his engineering principles. The standard burrow, according to findings of various biologists, among them R. E. Smith and the team of Robert Sheets, Raymond Linder and Robert Dahlgren, consists of two entrances connected by a passageway. One entrance is shaped like a low dome.

It opens into a tunnel that goes down





watch for danger. It provides a splendid exit facility, for popping inside he plunges immediately down the vertical shaft to the bottom, landing far below any surface danger. Now this burrow system might well be about 50 feet long, and what with being some six to ten feet below surface, would seem to pose an oxygen problem, since the natural diffusion of oxygen through the soil would not be enough to do the job at all. So, how does the prairie dog manage his oxygen supply?

Duke University zoologists Steven Vogel and William Bretz report that they have recently found the answer: the prairie dog supplies two simple engineering principles. Principle No. 1 is that when air moves along a surface, that nearest the surface will move at a slower rate. No. 2 is that the faster the air moves along a surface, the lower the pressure there. Now the wisdom of the digger's combination of a high crater entrance and a low dome entrance becomes apparent. The air moves

faster at the tall crater since it is up higher, and slower at the low dome entrance since it is closer to the surface. That is okay with principle No. 1. Then, since principle No. 2 says that pressure is lower where air is moving faster, the crater end is bound to have a lower pressure than the dome entrance where the air is moving more slowly.

The difference in air pressure at the two entrances sets up a suction between them, pulling the air through the burrow. In fact, lab tests using a model of a burrow in a wind tunnel proved that if air at the crater end was moving as little as one-half mile per hour and only one-quarter mile per hour at the dome end, there was a complete change of air in the burrow every 10 minutes. Looking at their findings, the Duke University scientists mentally tipped their hats to their fat buck-toothed colleagues who so long ago learned how to air condition their homes.

This fat little citizen of the West looks

gradually to become horizontal. Here the passageway is widened out in places to make turn-arounds and a bed chamber. As is to be expected from its comfort-loving owner, the boudoir is lined with soft dry grasses about two inches thick. Proceeding several feet further, the horizontal passageway makes an abrupt vertical turn, going almost straight up to the second entrance. This entrance is crater-shaped with walls built up high around it. In fact, the prairie dog goes to a lot of trouble to shape up this crater, scraping together the surrounding surface soil and pressing it hard into its walls with his paws and nose.

Subsequent study shows that the crater entrance is very important and the prairie dog knows it, working from time to time to keep the walls well maintained. Rising above the ground surface, the walls act as dikes to keep flood water unable to drain into the hard compacted soil after desert cloudbursts from running into his burrow. The crater works too as a kind of hollow tower on which he can sit and

Like people, prairie dogs (above) are suspicious of strangers, and (right) enjoy a snack while relaxing in the sun.



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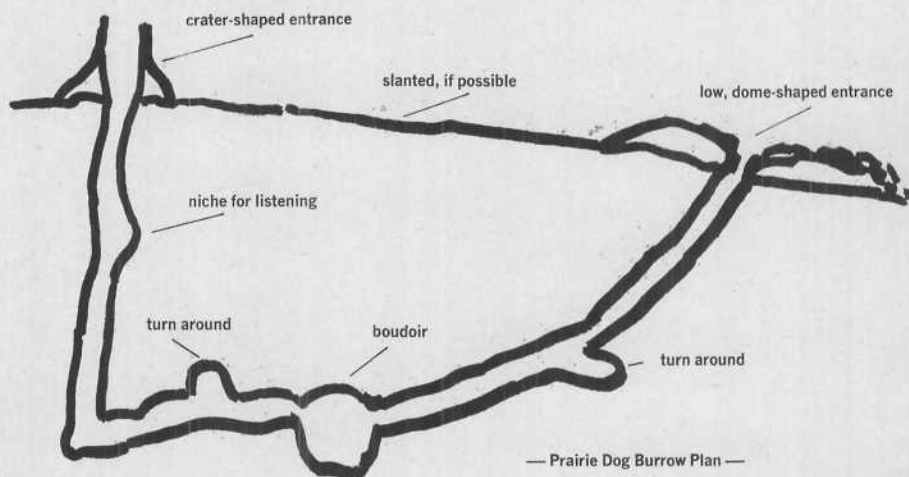
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as though he likes comfort in many ways, and indeed he keeps his paunchy stomach well filled with green plants or dry seeds, cutworms, beetles, grasshoppers and what's around? Even when the ground is rock hard in drought, he manages to look sleek and fat and downright cheerful. A day lover at heart, the prairie dog rolls out of bed at sunrise, spends the morning hours eating, lolling in the sun, trotting around and visiting. Friends and relations greet each other with a kiss prairie dog style, gently rubbing of their lips on the other's muzzle. The heat of mid-day finds each in his residence, returning topside for another feeding and frolic in the afternoon. Sundown finds everybody tucked in for the night.

the fact is that owls and snakes eat the prairie dogs, the owls also eat young snakes, the snakes eat the owl chicks and eggs and in reality nobody gets along with anybody. There are also other tenants—black widows at the entrance, centipedes, insect larvae, beetles, cave crickets, and ticks and fleas without number. No wonder the prairie dog says nuts to them all and digs himself a new residence.

In the northern ranges, prairie dogs hibernate, Wyoming white tails for instance emerging in March some two or three weeks before the females who went to bed later in the fall. Unlike many other kinds of hibernators, gentlemen prairie dogs emerge still wrapped in a thick layer of subcutaneous fat. This proves to be



Merry as these droll rodents are, each keeps a weather eye out even when eating. Sentinels are quick to report danger, and frequently a major predator is kept from scoring by somebody seeing it and barking a warning in plenty of time for everybody to tumble safely into his burrow. Coyotes, wolves, hawks, eagles work hard for a doggy dinner. But badgers are a different matter. Rapid and more powerful digger, they systematically go to work, tearing up the burrows and capturing whole families. Ferrets are even worse news in prairie dog towns, for they slip down the passageways for surprise kills. Snakes are impossible to keep out, and dearly love prairie dog a la carte.

Prairie dog burrows are so comfortable they attract two undesirable tenants — little lugubrious-faced burrowing owls and rattlesnakes. Early naturalists viewing this frequent three-way togetherness thought that everybody got on well together, but

very valuable and helps carry them through the rigors of the breeding season with its inattention to food matters, its wear and tear of battles and subsequent wooing. At the end of all this, the males are quite apt to establish new quarters away from the noisy family centers with their chattering females and highly vocal youngsters.

Gestation is around 27 to 33 days and not much is known about the 5 to 7 youngsters the first few weeks of their lives in the burrow. They do appear topside in mid June apparently well weaned by now and dining on green stuff themselves. One litter per year is the rule.

The prairie dog likes annual forbs above all, other greenery being passed up in favor of these whenever they are available. In a typical desert environment when times are bad, cactus, Spanish bayonet, mesquite bark are all eaten, and the animal must spend more time to find food. If the supply becomes dangerously far from bur-

row safety, the prairie dogs may move en masse and establish an entirely new town.

In the natural state of affairs, these ground squirrels and their environment are in balance. The arid plains provide enough food, and natural enemies and other troubles keep their numbers down. With the introduction of too many livestock, the picture changes abruptly. The grassland deteriorates from overgrazing. Forage plants decrease, short grass and sage increase and so do the prairie dogs, thanks to the wholesale slaughter of their natural enemies—wolves, coyotes, badgers, bobcats, pumas, raptor birds, that always accompanies livestock introduction. And, because man grabs nature's bounties all for himself, he wages war on the prairie dog, whose increase in numbers is a symptom of overgrazing and not the cause of it.

Some plants are destroyed by prairie dogs; some are helped in a kind of primitive cultivation, and abandoned burrows provide holes for badly needed water to enter parched soil. Under certain conditions, prairie dogs actually accelerate the recovery of deteriorated ranges. The rodents feed mainly on annual forbs and other plants typical of the early stages of plant succession (the overgrazed range situation) and as a result help to increase climax plant species, principally good forage grasses.

So at last the prairie dog, whose final disappearance from the scene seemed inevitable through ruthless destruction, is gaining thinking friends. Villages have been preserved in national monuments in Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, South Dakota,

Texas, Oklahoma and in the Desert Museum, Tucson, New Mexico in 1970 joined the ranks of prairie dog preservers, too, establishing a new refuge 30 miles north of Santa Fe.

This changing attitude is very good news for the prairie dog and for people interested in good range management. The scientist, who knows he still has much to learn from this fat little rodent, rejoices, and the chances are good that the desert traveler, if he's lucky, can still come upon a dog-town, and find these merry little fellows at home. ☐

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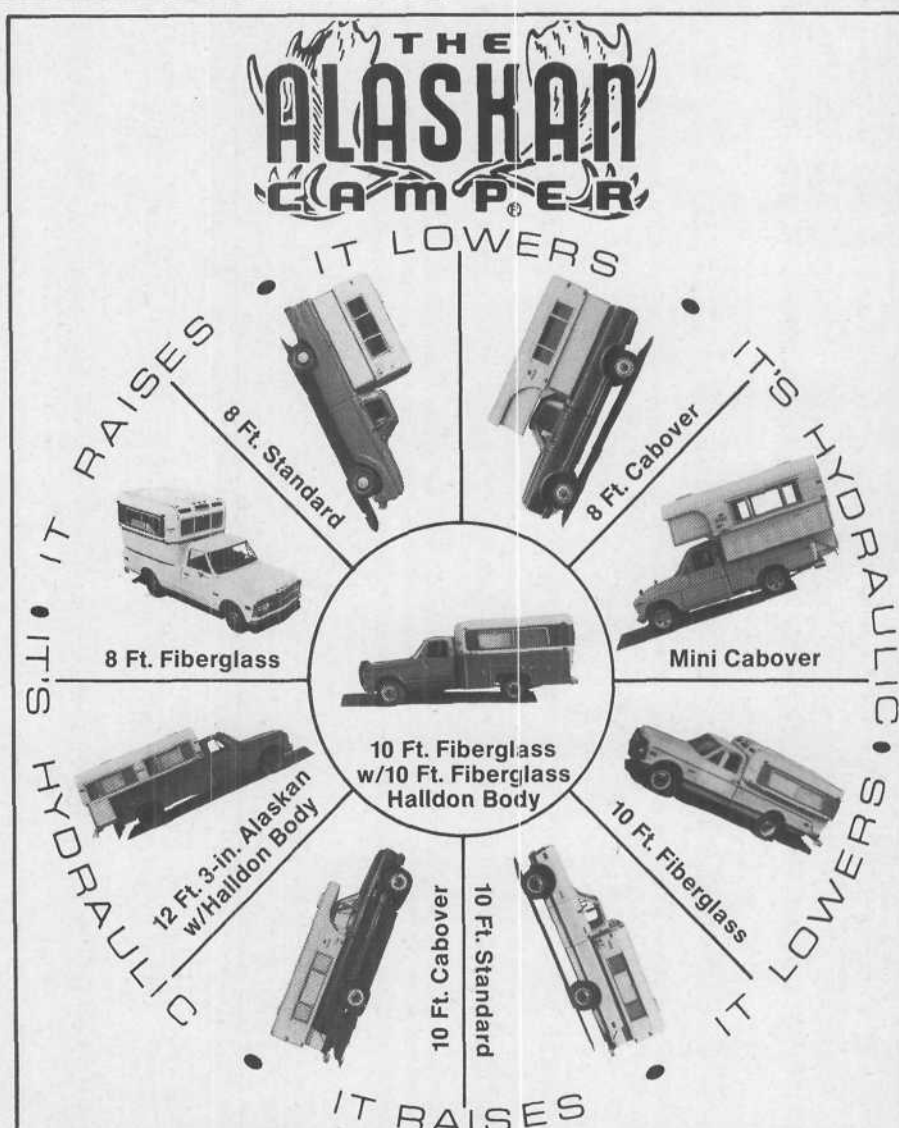
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GHOST TOWN

TREASURES SUCH as a Dutch oven full of coins, a chest containing family heirlooms and jewelry or a fruit jar full of gold nuggets have been found buried in the ground or in various parts of abandoned houses.

While digging through a dump looking for bottles, I found a cold cream jar containing gold and silver coins. Evidently the jar had been accidentally mixed with household rubbish and hauled to the dump.

There are thousands of other hidden treasures yet to be found, and with the advent of sophisticated metal detectors, a weekend of treasure hunting has become a popular family pastime.

However, many old-timers were afraid to bury or hide their wealth. Instead they stored it in the town's "community" safe or vault. (Many Navajo Indians pawn their beautiful handmade turquoise jewelry today; not so much for the money, but they know it will be safe in an Indian trader's vault.)

Nearly every old town or mining camp had a safe or vault. Some were in the bank—if the town had a bank—while others were in a saloon, barber shop or rooming house. I have found "safe seeking" a popular pastime.

The safes in the boom days of the roaring mining camps were about as impregnable as the safes of today. The older ones were resistant to saws, torches and impact tools. But they could be, and many times were, opened by means of explosives.

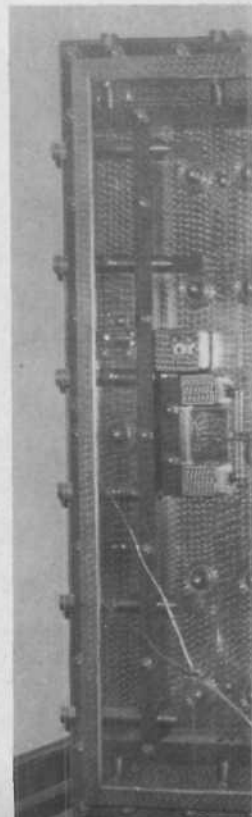
There were as many different sizes of safes as there were needs for them. The small one pictured is typical of about the smallest of its day. This particular safe has a history that includes being stolen and blown open. It was recovered in a refuse dump in a neighboring town, and brought back to be used as evidence. Later it was repaired, a new door was made for it, and is now in working order.

From this, the size ranges upward to almost unbelievable proportions. Some becoming a part of the structure that houses them. These are known as vaults and as such were apt to be governed by the size of the building. The storage area could be of any size and the safe company would build the door and install it.

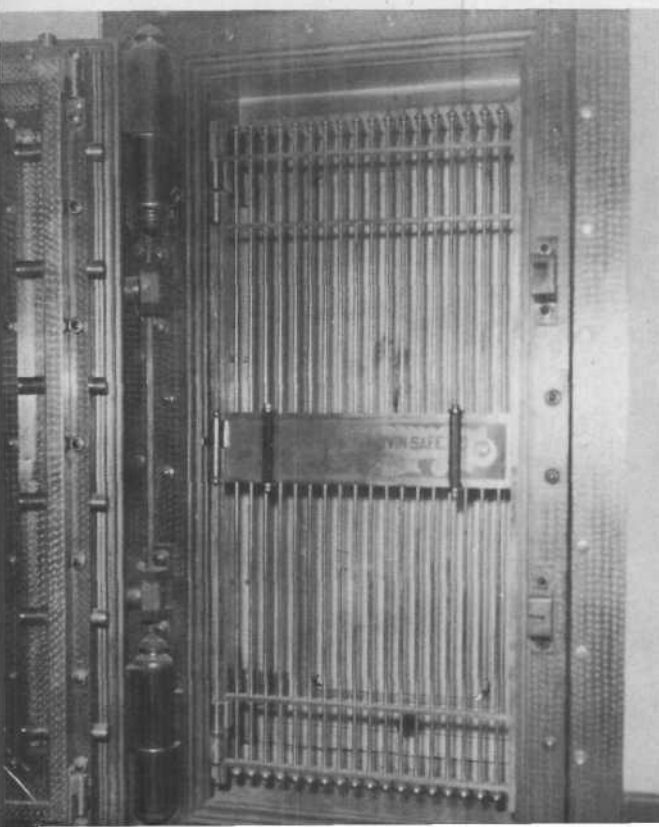
The bullion vault in the basement of the John S. Cook bank building in Goldfield, Nevada, is an excellent example of



by
Harold
Henderson



SAFE HUNTING



While "safe seeking" in the ghost towns of the West, author discovered and photographed a variety of safes. Four examples include ones found (upper, left) at Ballarat, (far, left) near Modoc, giant vault (left) in the Goldfield, Nevada bank building, and (above) one found in a refuse dump near Ventura which the author rebuilt.

the use of huge proportions dependent upon available space. Ten feet wide and 20 feet long, this vault was under lease to the U. S. Treasury. The lettering is partly readable even now. Beside the usual amount of papers and valuables, there has been as much as \$1,000,000 in gold bullion stored here at one time.

There is another vault of similar dimensions on the main floor of the building. This one is quite ornate, having two fabulous doors. The inside of the doors is enclosed with glass. The bolts, wheels and mechanism are gold plated and hand burnished. The cost of construction of these two vaults was \$70,000. Today the estimated cost of the doors alone would be \$14,000 each.

The large vault in one of the stock exchange buildings in Goldfield in which stacks of gold bars were once stored, is of interest in a rather surprising way. As you enter the vault through the heavy gold-trimmed door, you are amazed to come face-to-face with the wooden door of a refrigerated walk-in meat locker. This vault was built around 1908 and the meat locker was constructed within it in the 1930s for R. C. Laub's meat market.

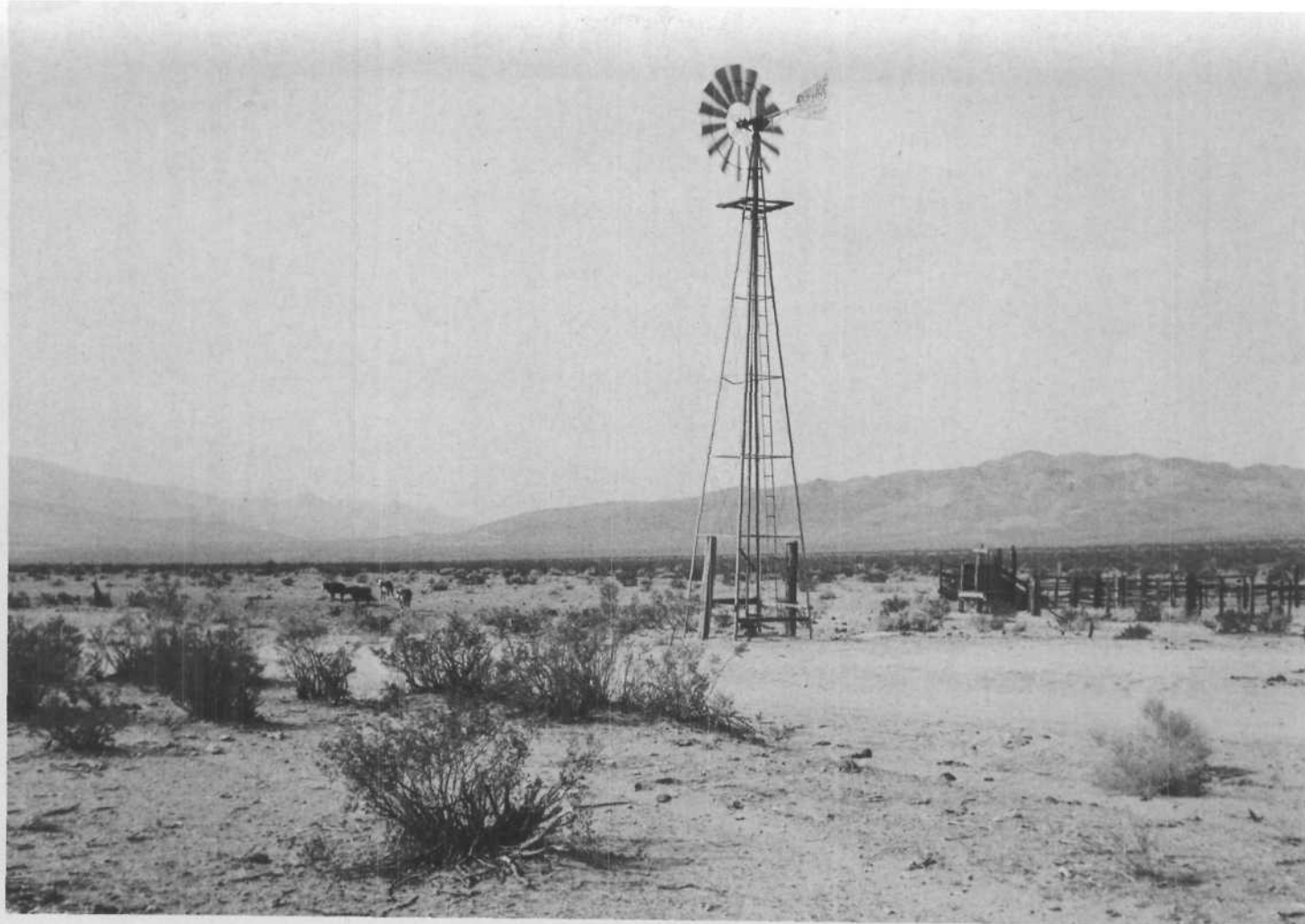
As the sights of abandoned and disintegrating old towns are visited, it is interesting to search for the remains of a safe. One will usually be present. The remains may be difficult to locate but the find will be worth the effort.

If the building that houses the safe's remains is in good shape, the safe will probably be in good condition with the original finish.

But if the building has been destroyed, or if the safe has been removed from the building and left outdoors, it is a safe bet that all you will find is a skeleton and the doors will be gone. The broken and battered safe and its pieces will bear silent testimony of the results of willful destruction by persons who did not appreciate the old safe as a relic.

So many of these silent shells of safes that once held such values have taken their stories and the romance thereof with them. Slowly they disintegrate and blend into the trash and junk scattered about and disappear from view.

It will always be with the same anticipation of wild, exciting events that we read and re-read the romantic accounts of the vital part the faithful old safes played in the history of our frontier towns. □



THE LURE OF





CAMP ROCK ROAD

by

Lyle E.
Fournier

"ITS resources are hardly tapped, its beauty is relatively unknown and its potential for recreation and wildlife is virtually unlimited. This wide-open space offers invigorating change from the hurry and press of urban life; it offers refreshment for the spirit in its multitude of scenes."

Thus, *Room To Roam*, published by the U. S. Department of the Interior, describes some 40 million acres of public domain land, approximately 11 million acres of which are contained within the boundaries of California deserts.

A tiny spot of this desert, nestled between Ord and Rodman Mountains in San Bernardino County, has all of these attributes.

My wife and I stumbled upon it quite by accident, in the spring of 1970. Recently we found ourselves again in need of "refreshment for the spirit."

We decided it was only fitting to share

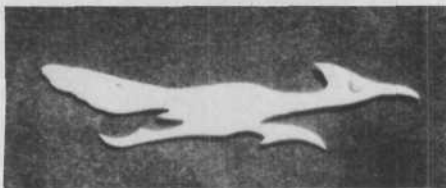
this remote, isolated haven we had enjoyed so often with others. It is an area rich in potential for the treasure hunter, bottle collector, naturalist, historian, and a boon to those who seek only the quiet serenity of a desert retreat.

We began our trip at the juncture of Barstow Road and North Side Road about five miles north of Lucerne Valley. Heading east on North Side Road, the blacktop ends in about five miles. Two more miles of dirt road took us to Camp Rock Road. This is generally well graded. However, there may be a few spots of washboard.

Our objective was an area of approximately four square miles located just northwest of Holb Well. About seven and one-half miles up Camp Rock Road we spotted a high-voltage line. Beyond the power line and to the left, the gray, granite fingers of Ord Mountain probe the desert sky.

We were tempted by several side roads

The windmill and old corral (above, left) mark the site of Holb Well. Camp Rock Road (left) makes a right-angle turn at Holb Well. Abandoned prospectors' diggings and rock houses can be found in the area. From an old mine, (above) the Camp Rock Road can be seen in the valley below. All photos by the author.



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and byways beckoning us to investigate the hidden mysteries just over the next hill. Unless you're driving a four-wheel-drive vehicle, resist the temptation! It's a long way to the nearest telephone and this is no place to get stuck in the sand.

Twelve miles from where we left North Side Road, we came to a point where Camp Rock Road makes a right-angled turn to the left.

To the east is a road leading up to a windmill. This is Holb Well. It is worth your time to explore the area. You may find an old bottle turned azure in the desert sun—or the metal detector may turn up some old antique.

Fifteen hundred feet farther east is an old mine shaft. It has been boarded up but we could look inside without too much trouble. Old mine shafts can be extremely dangerous so do not reconnoiter past the entrance!

Off to the left were some large granite and sandstone boulders. There is evidence of past campsites around the huge rocks; another place where the metal detector may be used to advantage.

Still farther east — approximately six miles—are three separate locations where Indian petroglyphs are found. This road, for the most part, is not for conventional passenger cars.

The Department of the Interior *Room To Roam* shows the old Spanish Trail in 1822 passing directly through the site of the petroglyphs and heading nearly straight west, finally turning south and terminating in the Los Angeles Basin. If this were indeed a true location of this old trail, we could, from our present vantage point, see a considerable portion of it by looking westward along the valley between the Ord and Rodman Mountain.

With due respect to the Department, I suspect the location of the Old Spanish Trail as depicted in this publication is in error. Research will show the trail to be farther north and more generally following the Mojave River. Also, the terrain to our east, as it passed through petroglyph area, is extremely rough and beset by past volcanic activity. The terrain is decidedly not conducive to either wagon or packhorse type of travel.

However, I am not at all sure that we were not looking along an old Indian trail—and possibly a trail followed by some of the early whites. It is well known that the Mohave Indians often served as





Area has many old mines (left) and washes (below) with prehistoric Indian petroglyphs.

guides to those attempting to find the shortest route into the San Bernardino and Los Angeles Basins. An account of Jedediah Smith, for example, says he went into the San Bernardino valley east of Cajon Pass. We do not know exactly how far east. We know too, that he used Indian guides to make this trip and it could be he passed by this way.

In the early 1880s, the notorious Ute chief, Walkara, drove his herds of stolen horses out of the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Valleys and hid them in the desert until he could sell or trade them.

It was time to leave Holb Well so we headed down Camp Rock Road for a half mile or so. Off to the right is a portion of the Rodman Mountain range. Within hiking distance in a series of small gullies and ravines.

In the trek from Camp Rock Road to the mouths of the ravines, keep a sharp eye open. On her first trip across this area, my wife picked up an unblemished purple, pumpkin-seed whiskey flask. It is noteworthy, too, that we did not see a single beer can or pop bottle.

There are remnants of an old prospector's camp about one hundred yards in from the mouth of one of the ravines. Rusted tin cans and old bottles abound. This is an ideal spot for metal detectors.

About fifteen hundred yards on up the gully, over boulders and sharp rocks is an old copper mine.

Rusted and deteriorated to some extent, the old windlass and cable are still intact. The dry desert air has preserved them quite well.

Wherever mineral deposits are found, there is always a good possibility of finding gemstone. In this case several small pieces of chrysocolla were found. I am confident a more discerning eye and a little digging will reveal much more.

From this elevation we looked down onto the valley floor and saw Camp Rock Road snaking its way into Daggett.

Stay overnight and you will be entertained by a chorus of coyotes. One came within a hundred yards of our trailer despite the vigilance of our large German Shepherd. Later he joined his brethren and together gave us an early morning rendition of "The Desert Song." ☐



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New Mexico's Mystery Mesa

by
Marjorie White

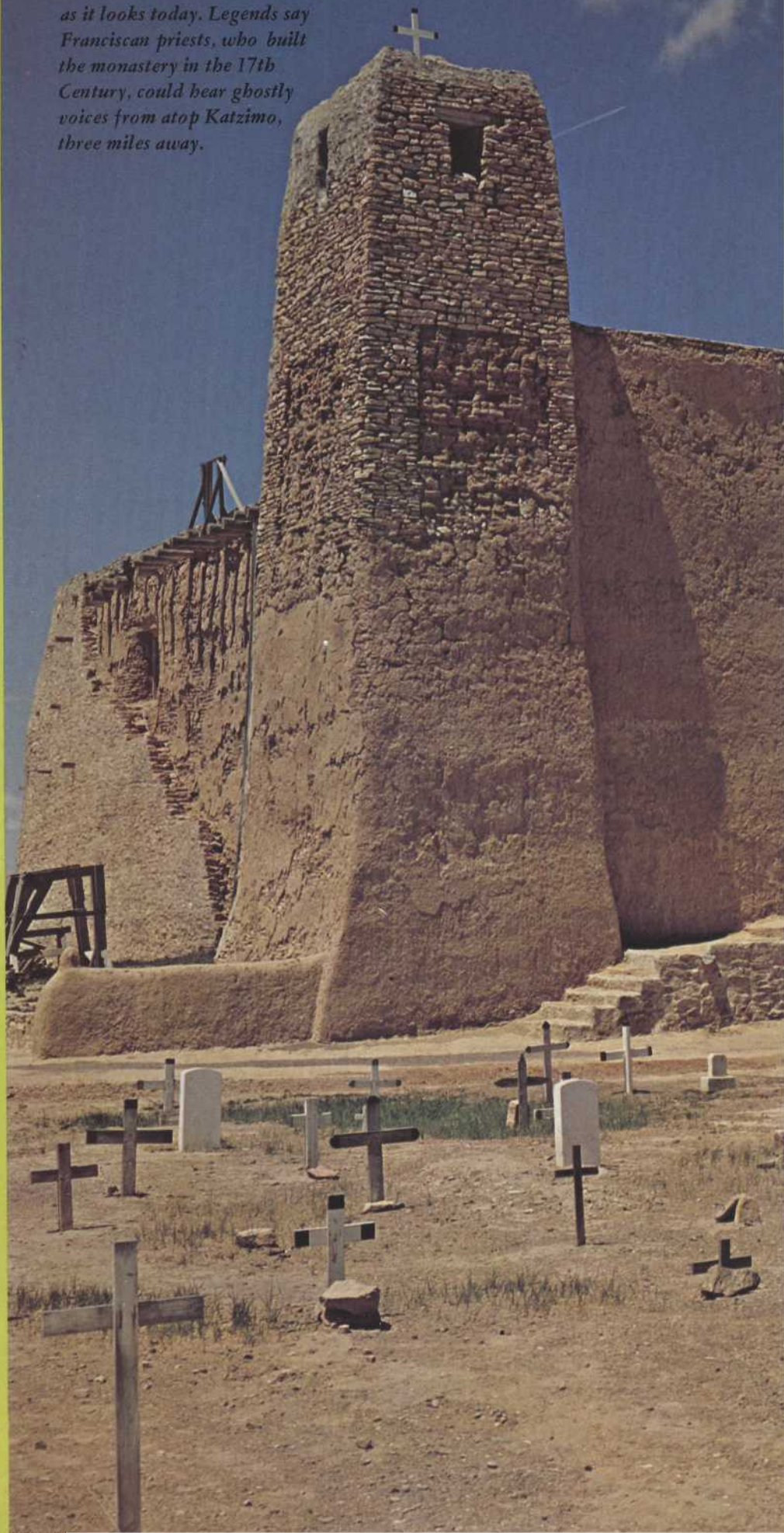
Photos by the author

NEW MEXICO'S Enchanted Mesa stands like a medieval fortress in a landscape of pastel-hued sandstone domes, castles, and tables on the Acoma Pueblo Indian Reservation, south of Interstate 40, about 60 miles southwest of Albuquerque. The vertical, gently-turreted walls of the famous landmark, rise precipitately 430 feet above the valley floor and, from dawn to dusk, shifting colors and patterns of sun and clouds shimmer in eye-filling beauty from the erosion-worn surface.

The Acoma name for the Enchanted Mesa is Katzimo (Kaht-ZEE-mo), which means "haunted," with the implication of "accursed." Indian legend, passed on from father to son for over 1000 years, explains why and lends mystery to enhance the grandeur of the natural rock stronghold.

Many centuries ago, the Acomas say, their ancestors left Shipapu, their place

San Esteban de Acoma Mission as it looks today. Legends say Franciscan priests, who built the monastery in the 17th Century, could hear ghostly voices from atop Katzimo, three miles away.





of origin in the north, and after several stops on the way, settled on the Enchanted Mesa as their home site. They made dwellings on the flat, nearly level top and planted crops on the valley land below.

The lofty, sheer-walled bastion was an ideal location, easy to defend against hostile nomadic peoples. It had only one access, by a ladder of sticks placed in holes packed into a huge boulder that extended above a depression on the southwestern side of Katzimo. The ancient Acomas climbed up and down the ladder rock to till their fields of cotton, corn, beans and squash.

So they lived, secure from enemies, for untold years—or centuries. But one summer day, while they were gathering the harvest in the valley below, a storm struck suddenly. Perhaps, say the Acomas, their ancestors were disrespectful of the gods and the thunderbird spilled the lake on his back in punishment. Thunder crashed, lightning crackled, and torrents of water rushed over the Enchanted Mesa. Then, like a typical desert shower, the rain stopped as quickly as it had started.

When the water abated, the ancient Acomas tried to return home. But they found their ladder rock had been forced out of place by the storm and there was no way to reach the summit of Katzimo.

Two old women and a young boy and his mother, who had been left at home, were stranded on the mesa top and their cries for help spurred the rescue efforts. One woman jumped to her death. When sacrifices to the gods and all human attempts to reach the summit failed, the Acoma ancestors sadly turned their faces away from Katzimo.

They wandered three miles southwest of Enchanted Mesa and built new homes atop the mesa of Acoma, where Coronado, the first Spanish explorer of New Mexico, found them in 1541. This rock-top pueblo has been the home of the Acoma Indians since about 900 A. D., and may be the oldest continuously inhabited village on the mainland of the United States.

Franciscan priests in the monastery of 17th century San Esteban mission in Acoma Pueblo, the Indians say, used to say they heard the ghostly voices of the abandoned ancestors echo at night from the summit of Katzimo.

Is the Acoma legend about Enchanted Mesa based on fact or fancy? That's what Frederick W. Hodge, noted archeologist



The Enchanted Mesa stands like a solitary fortress in New Mexico.

and authority on Pueblo Indian culture, wanted to know when he visited Acoma Pueblo in 1895.

When Hodge found fragments of prehistoric pottery in the 224-foot high talus, debris washed down from the summit of Katzimo, he decided to try an ascent. He climbed to within 60 feet of the top and was stymied at that point, like the ancient Acomas of the legend, by an unscalable boulder. A careful check of the big rock showed a series of regular and badly-eroded holes, which has been gouged into the soft sandstone surface. They were just the right size and spacing to hold sticks to form a ladder.

Was this the ladder rock that fell during the great storm? Hodge was sure it was, and this evidence, along with the potsherds recovered from the talus, seemed to confirm the Acoma tradition that the Enchanted Mesa had once been inhabited.

But Hodge's published report did not

make a believer of Prof. William Libbey of Princeton University who, in the summer of 1897, was conveyed—and photographed in transit—by a chair of ropes to the top of Katzimo. In a *Harper's Weekly* article, entitled "The Dis-Enchanted Mesa," Libbey said he saw nothing that would indicate ever a former visit by human beings."

Hodge, who was working nearby in Arizona when Libbey's report was printed, was challenged by the contradiction of his expert opinion by a "pretentious green-horn" and was intrigued by a photograph of a curious stone monument that Libbey had found on the summit and attributed to erosion. He immediately made plans for another ascent—all the way to the top this time—of Enchanted Mesa.

To assist him, Hodge chose two members of his archeological expedition crew—H. C. Hayt of Chicago and Pasadena photographer-bookstore owner Adam C.

Vroman, whose artistic photos of the Enchanted Mesa research and many other scenic wonders of the Southwest are preserved on glass-plate negatives in the Los Angeles County Museum.

At Laguna Pueblo, next door neighbor to Acoma Pueblo, Hodge enlisted the services of Maj. George Pradt, an experienced government surveyor, and two young Lagunas to drive the wagons, carrying the equipment. The party made camp in a grove of junipers at the southwestern corner of the mesa on the morning of Sept. 3, 1897, the day after a drenching rain shower, like that of the Acoma legend. On this site today, the modern Acomas have built a pleasant little picnic ground, where visitors have a splendid close-up of the Enchanted Mesa and the talus, where Hodge found prehistoric pottery shards, piled halfway up the cliff-side.

Hodge and his companions began the climb at noon, their progress slowed by the burden of heavy photographic equipment, surveying instruments, and half-dozen lengths of extension ladders, and a quantity of ropes and blankets. When they reached the point, 60 feet below the summit, where Hodge had been stopped on his first ascent, they set up their ladders, imbedding the bottom legs in holes drilled into the boulder.

One man, a length of rope tied around his waist, climbed the vertical, swaying ladder and, once on top, fastened his rope to the rock and threw it down to the next man. When the four explorers reached the summit, they threw down ropes to which the Laguna youths, who stayed on the lower level, tied blanket-wrapped pieces of photographic and surveying equipment to be drawn up one by one.

"The view from the summit is sublime," Hodge wrote later. "Pink mesas, haughty in their grandeur . . . placid pools, born of yesterday's storm, glittering like diamonds in an emerald field." But the 50-acre table top of Enchanted Mesa was less sublime.

Windswept and washed by centuries of rain, the almost-barren surface was covered only by a thin layer of shard-strewn sand and littered here and there with decayed tree skeletons, long dead from lack of nourishing soil. Any dwellings that might have once been on the summit, Hodge said, would have been weathered to ruins and borne away long ago by waterfalls such as he had seen cascading

down the cliffs the preceding day.

Since dusk was approaching by the time the tedious and dangerous climb was completed, Hodge and his companions made a fire and prepared to spend the night on their lofty perch.

At dawn, they were awakened by three angry Acomas, who had seen the campfire from their pueblo and came to rout the intruders from their sacred Katzimo. The Lagunas, camped below, said the Acomas had threatened at first to cut down the ladder, but curiosity prevailed. They, too, wanted to see where their ancestors had lived.

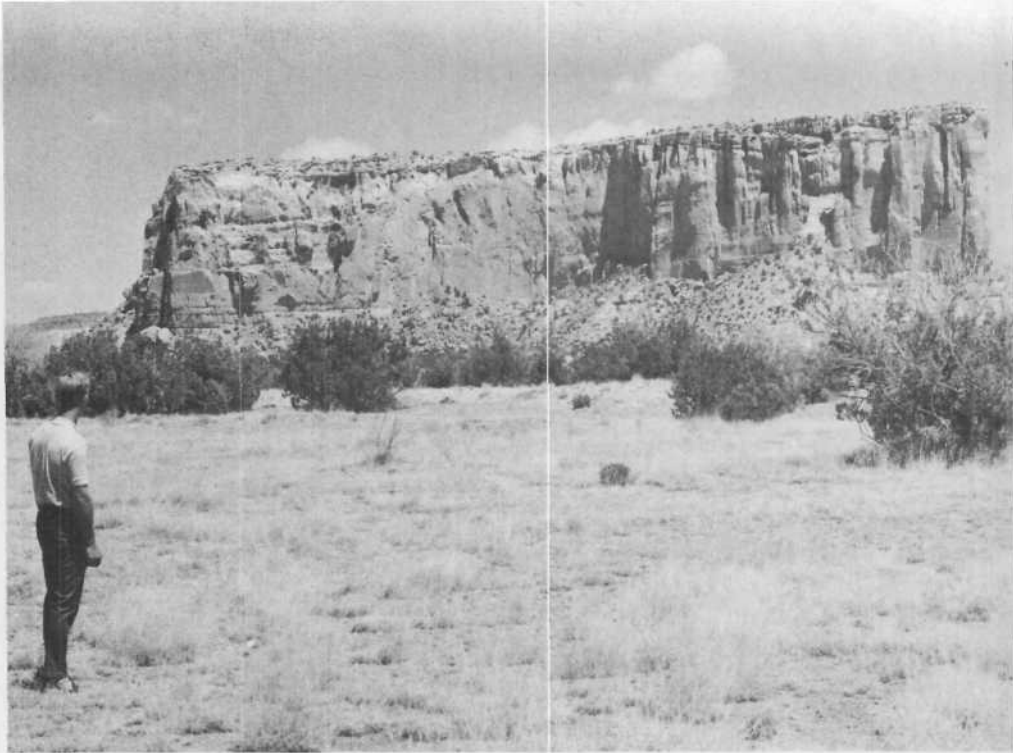
After Hodge explained the purpose of the ascent, the Acomas were eager to join in the search for relics. Among the finds were arrowpoints, pieces of shell bracelets, a quantity of very ancient, coarse-textured pottery fragments, and crudely-serrated blades of axes, one of which the Acomas wished to keep for ceremonial use.

The little monument, which had caught Hodge's attention in the Libbey expedition photograph, remained a puzzler. It is formed by an upright, slender slab of rock, 30 inches tall, held in place by smaller rocks around the base. Hodge was sure that it was man-made and of such antiquity that the design held no significance for the Acomas who examined it with him. These discoveries on the summit reinforced the archeologist's earlier opinion that the Enchanted Mesa was an ancestral home of the Acoma Indians.

"Katzimo is still enchanted!" said Hodge in his subsequent articles in *National Geographic and Land of Sunshine* (later, *Out West*), a Los Angeles-based magazine, founded and edited by Charles Lummis, pioneer historian of the Southwest, a name which he coined for the region extending from West Texas and New Mexico across southern California.

Lummis, who had assisted the eminent Swiss archeologist, Adolph Ranbelier, in research of prehistoric Indian ruins during his earlier residence in New Mexico, made his own search of the top of Enchanted Mesa a few years later, using the ladder which Hodge had left there. He found more artifacts and traces of a dwelling remains, which contributed to the previous evidence of former habitation.

No archeological examinations of Enchanted Mesa have been reported since 1907. It is not recommended for moun-



Few white men have succeeded in getting to the top of mysterious Katzimo.

taineers because the upper 60 feet must be scaled with artificial aids, such as belays, and only with permission from the Acomas.

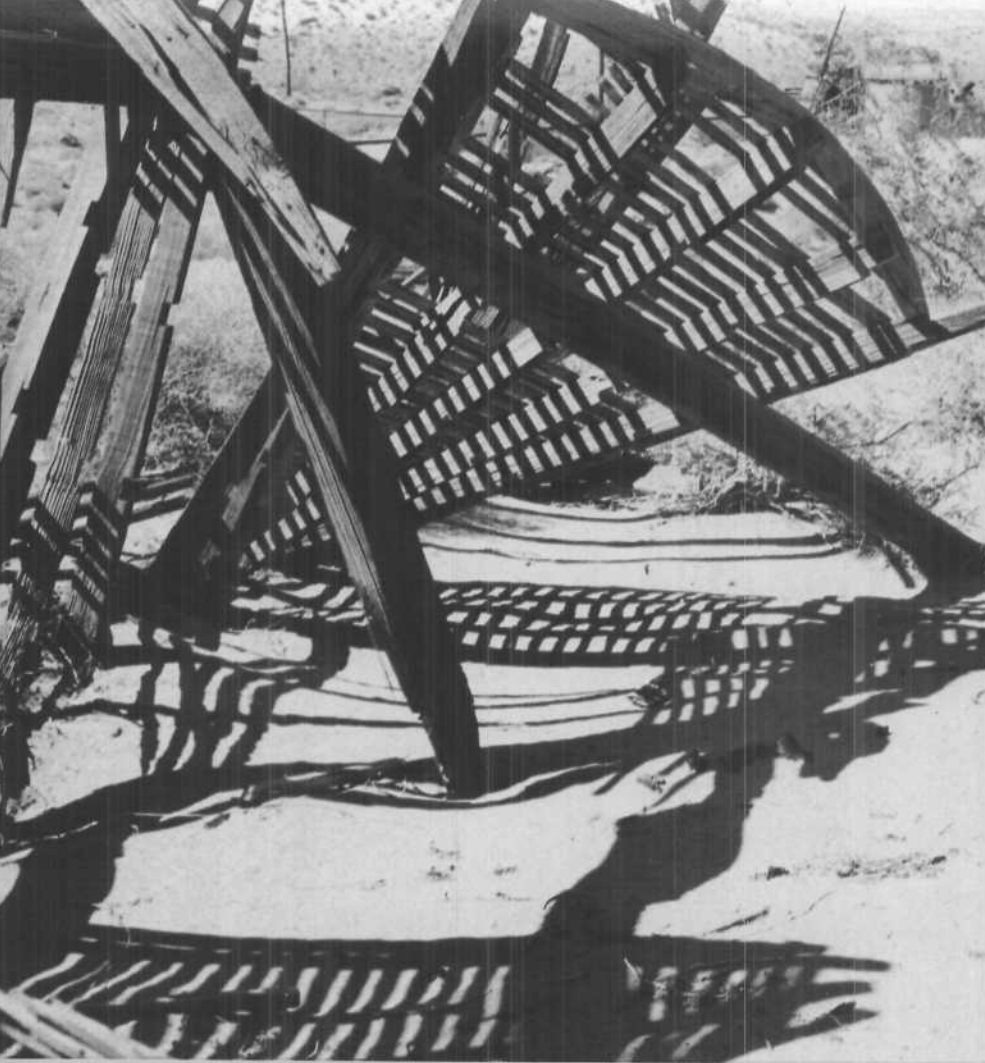
So, the Enchanted Mesa, which Lummis called "the noblest single rock in America," remains shrouded in a aura of mystery and legend, and the wind that sighs around the lonely walls may still carry the spirit voices of the ancient ones who waited for help on that long-ago summer day.

A marker points the way to the En-

chanted Mesa and the access road to the picnic ground, a few hundred yards off NM State 23, the route to Acoma Pueblo, the historic, still-inhabited village atop the accessible 357-foot high rock of Acoma. Guided tours of Acoma Pueblo also permit views of Enchanted Mesa, especially good from the walled grounds of San Esteban Mission, and at a distance of three miles, in the as-yet smog-free atmosphere of the Acoma reservation, the haze of reflected sunlight adds a misty outline that becomes a haunted place. □

More than 1,000 years old, today's Acoma Village is three miles from Katzimo.





Desert Loop Trip

by Roberta M. Starry



*Old sand
fence (left)
and a few
gutted buildings
are all that
is left of
the famous
Yellow Aster
Mine.*

*Nature's sculpture
(below) can
be enjoyed at
Red Rock Canyon
State Park.
Randsburg
(right) today
is a picturesque
community for
tourists.*



Photo by
Warren Transue

ONE OF Southern California's newest state parks, Red Rock Canyon, just 25 miles northeast of Mojave, is a place of unique beauty. After exploring its many fantastic, multi-colored formations and canyons so often filmed in western movies and television, it is a picturesque place to camp while discovering the country around the park.

A loop trip out of the park—which can be completed in one day—encompasses a wide variety of interests. It takes you a step back into history, through old mining communities and abandoned mines, to a step into the future and a view of the race between subdivision and agriculture absorbing the desert acres. Three to four miles southwest out of the park on State 14 (distance depending on which point in the park one uses as starting point), is a large boarded-up building that still carries the sign "Wagon Wheel." A sharp, left turn puts you on the Red Rock-Randsburg Road, heading east.

The route starts through dips with sand-banked sides created by storm runoff from Red Rock Canyon. The face of the land is changed when infrequent but vicious storms push tons of water, boulders

and sand out of the canyon onto the open country. Two miles after leaving State 14 one of the sand banks, bisected by the road, can be identified as an abandoned railroad bed, part of a dream that turned into a financial nightmare.

In 1908, Mojave was the jumping-off point from which a rail line was built by Southern Pacific. It was June of that year that the tracks reached Cantil. The main line avoided Red Rock Canyon because of floods and steep grades.

But there was a need to get supplies into the canyon during the construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct and a group of men put fortunes in the Red Rock Railroad. One flash flood twisted and laid waste the greater portion of the little line, smaller floods took their toll. In 1910, only 22 months old, the road was abandoned as an expensive experiment.

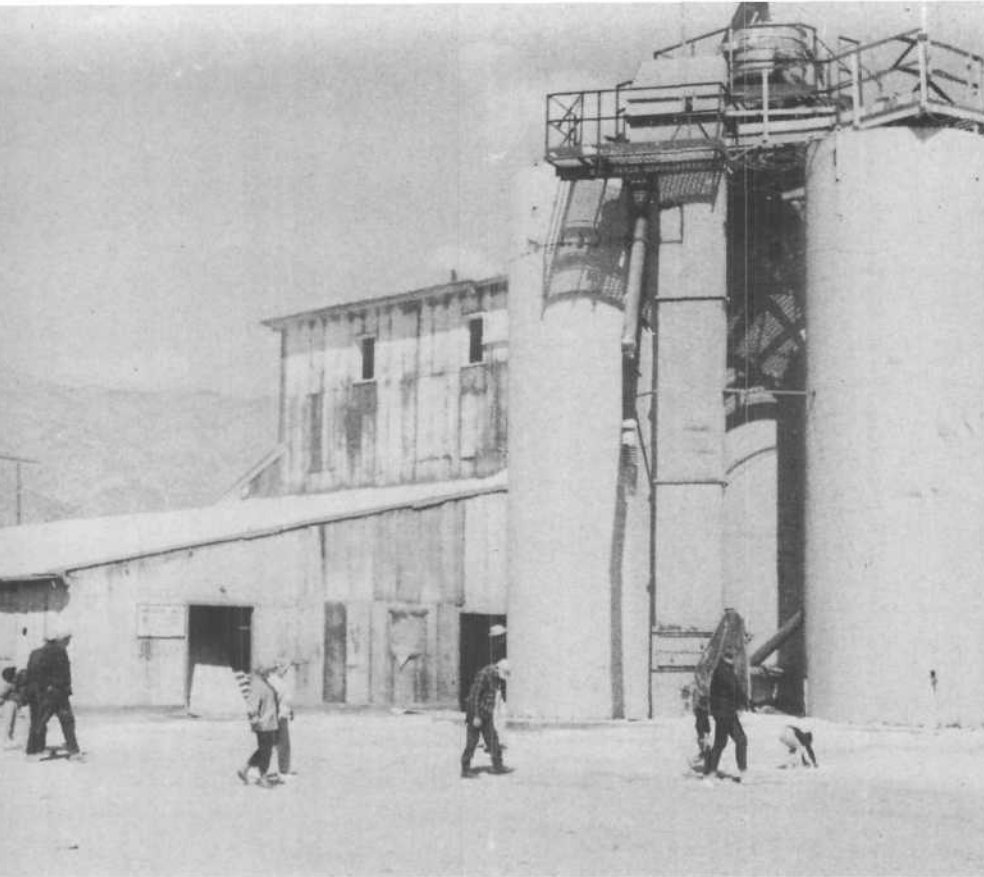
Looking toward Red Rock Canyon, there is a house and other buildings which now lie within the park. In the 1920s the highway went past there and the roadhouse did a flourishing business as well as acquiring a reputation for shootings and a hideout for bootleggers. In those days the road was carved through the

sand, travel was slow and a shovel was a necessity.

Seven miles from State 14, a dirt road turns right toward a cluster of mill buildings on the edge of the white expanse of Koehn Dry Lake. For over 50 years salt has been a product of the lake. The American Salt Company of Long Beach, present owners of the lake, process salt around the clock all through the year. Saltdale, once a company town with barracks and cabins for the workers, is now mostly mill and equipment structures.

In the early days salt companies depended upon rain to carry minerals and water down into the lake and then waited for summer heat to evaporate the liquid so salt could be gathered. Everything from chopping up the salt blocks to filling sacks with the final processed product was done by hand and a number of men were employed when nature cooperated with rain and heat. Today the process of evaporating the liquor pumped from deep wells in the lake, to the refined salt ready for market, has become mechanized and few men are required to operate the mill.

Salt, one of man's most sought-after minerals, has created wars, spurred explor-



Guided tours of the Saltdale production plant can be arranged by first stopping at the company office. Photo by Mary Berry shows the Red Ball Trailer Club on tour.

ers and been the basis of trade routes being developed between distant lands. Here the whole process from beautiful pink liquor to pure white salt may be seen,

but permission to do so must be obtained at the office in the mill building. Extent of allowable exploration will depend on working conditions at the time. Just freely



Riding one of the famous Thunderbird Ranch Peruvian thoroughbreds, Trainer Baca collects mail at the Cantil post office. Riding gear is also from Peru.

wandering about is not safe or permitted.

Continuing on the Red Rock-Randsburg Road, you travel parallel to the Southern Pacific tracks and one of the old Borax roads to Mojave. Way stations, water stops and depots are gone; the haunting whistle of the steam locomotive no longer echoes along the valley and into the canyons. But the line is still busy; multiple engines daily haul talc, mineral concentrates and chemicals over the rail line that old-timers dubbed the "Rabbit Trail" when it first pushed its way through the sage and sand.

Six miles from the intersection of Saltdale and the Red Rock-Randsburg Road is a Y. A hard surface road to the left is a one-mile side trip to the historic old town site of Garlock. Vandals have destroyed much in recent years. But there are still things of interest, like the sagging old house that belonged to "Granny" Slocum, a well known character of the area, a rock building that looks like a bank but in its prime (1898-1906) was a bar and bawdy house across from the stage stop.

In a way, the owner was a kind of banker as he bought gold and made loans—that is if the miner or long-team driver managed to get past the temptation of the bar at the front, the girls' little rooms and finally reach the office at the back. The same hazardous course had to be run in getting back out of the place.

In the early 1890s, the town was mostly a tent settlement with supplies for the long-team drivers, a few travelers and the cowboys who had dug a number of wells to supply water for their grazing herds. As gold mining developed, the town grew and gold mills moved in because of the water supply and access to the few wagon roads through the area.

The mills have gone for scrap, adobe buildings have disintegrated, and only one dugout can still be seen. An arrastra beyond the historical marker shows how a drag mill operated to crush gold-bearing rock.

Returning to the Randsburg Road and crossing the railroad tracks, the route crosses a valley and climbs the Rand Mountains. The valley and the mountain-side form a garden of wildflowers in spring if the rains have been just right. The season varies with the weather. High desert cold may cause a late season and sudden heat shortens the blooming period, but there are always some from late March

through mid-May. Though no flowers are evident from the road, a short walk into the desert will produce many surprises with clumps of growth in sheltered areas. In April the mini-flowers carpet the valley floor. They are worth getting down to the ground to examine; a magnifying glass brings out their unusual beauty.

Randsburg is a famous gold mining town dating from the late 1890s. Buildings in use before the turn of the century are still occupied and, with the exception of electricity and many coats of paint, they have changed little. In the general store it is still possible to get a phosphate, or soda at a soda fountain that is now rarely seen outside a movie or photo in a book.

As in the old days, it carries everything from drug store items to miner's lamps and gold pans. Across the street is the famous old White House Saloon with multi-floor levels, wine cellar, long bar and secret exits. Today it breathes respectability with relics to view or buy.

Interesting old buildings line the street on both sides, a picnic area near the Museum is a modern touch that gives the traveler a shaded spot to pause and view the surroundings. The Museum has displays telling the story of the famous gold mines, the people that worked the mines, and the way of life over 70 years ago.

Continuing on the main street through town, the Big Butte Mine and mill loom straight ahead, then the road curves to the right through mining country marked by tunnels, shafts, dumps and A frames.

Unfortunately, the famous Yellow Aster Mine on the hill above Randsburg was destroyed by fire in December, 1970, and is now off-limits to visitors.

Two miles out of Randsburg, take a well-traveled road to the right for six-tenths of a mile and right again at the junction of Mojave, Randsburg Road. Locally this area is called Dog Patch, with its cluster of buildings, mounds from past diggings and remains of mine structures.

If you want to explore more old mines, leave the Mojave-Randsburg Road in less than a mile and take the oiled road to the left which goes to the Atolia tungsten field and U.S. 395. Roads branch and return, others skirt the diggings or go to mines that have gone back into operation. DO NOT TRESPASS ON POSTED PROPERTY!

There are endless roads that offer hours of exploring and scenic views of landmarks like Pilot Knob and Fremont Peak.

Mojave-Randsburg Road skirts the foothills of the Rand Mountains and there is continuous evidence of mining. About 12 miles from starting on this road there is a noticeable change from virtually untouched desert to marks of subdivision development. Roads and streets slice across the land, the forerunner of people and houses.

Within the next five miles there is usually a wide variety of plants including marigold, coreopsis, various gillias, monkey flower, poppy, fiddleneck, blazing star, larkspur and aster. They spread from the roadside over the rolling hills until they become a soft haze in the distance.

Signs on the left indicate various roads to Galileo Hill, a side trip to a high point that gives a spectacular view of the desert in all directions. The view may be limited on windy days by the shifting sand in the valley and flat lands. A calm, sunny day is ideal for a visit to Galileo Hill not only for seeing far, but for comfort while viewing the miles that spread out to familiar landmarks.

The Mojave-Randsburg Road goes through the main section of California City which at one time was considered a unique development in the heart of nothing but desert. Today it is a modern community where supplies are available, recreation is encouraged and growth is the password.

Neuralia Road leaves California City at the west end of the business district and heads north toward Red Rock Canyon through newly developed alfalfa, sheep

and horse breeding ranches. Here is the home of the recently developed Cantil Pony and one of the largest stables of Peruvian Paso horses in the United States. Thirteen miles from California City is a one mile side trip to Cantil.

One of the few remaining railroad water tanks still stands, a reminder of the need of frequent water stops for the old locomotives. Through the door of the abandoned store building can be seen the wooden boxes of the first post office. On the rail siding are ore cars loaded with chunks of white clay, raw material for the makers of fine white china. Week-days one may meet the postmaster, last of the old-time assayers, who lived during the mining boom days and knows where there is still gold to be dug when the price goes up.

One mile farther on Neuralia Road is State 14. Red Rock Canyon State Park is just around the corner to the north where any day one may find a movie company on location, a science class exploring formations, an art group trying to capture color and form—or there may be just the quiet broken by the hum of a bee, the call of a bird or the whisper of a breeze. □

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Gold in the Snake Range!



by
George
Thompson



When Tom Watkins' sleek black horse strayed from camp, his owner followed him into the sage-covered Nevada hills. He not only found his horse, but the animal was standing on a rotten quartz ledge containing a gold bonanza!



"**G**OLD Strike in the Snake Range!" So shouted the headlines of the *Osceola Nevada Nugget* in March, 1906, but there was no one left in town to read them, for Osceola was deserted, except for the town drunk and a one-legged man! Nevada's last great gold rush had begun!

It all started when Tom Watkins lost his horse. For years he had prospected around the placer mining camp of Osceola, always sure that somewhere in the mountains he would find the missing lode from which the gold in Osceola's dry gulches came. His sleek black horse was his special pride, so when it strayed from camp one day in the desolate Snake Range he lost no time following its trail.

Watkins followed the black horse into the sage-covered foothills north of Osceola, where the 12,000-foot high peaks of the Snake Range suddenly break off into the rolling hills that meet the glaring wastes of Utah's salt desert. On a

rocky slope, seven miles south of Mt. Moriah and eight miles northeast of Osceola, he found the black horse. And there, shining in the morning sun, almost as if the black horse has led him to it, was a rotten quartz ledge shot through and through with stringers of yellow gold! Watkins staked his claim on March 6, 1906 and what better name could he call his find than the Black Horse claim?

Watkins took samples of his discovery to an Osceola assayer, and then with Dick Millick, his partner of many prospecting trips, he hurried back to his claim, not even waiting for the results of his assay. It was lucky that they lost no time, for the assayer had a secret too good to keep. The samples were the richest he had ever seen, and within hours everyone at Osceola knew of the new strike. Overnight Osceola was deserted in the mad rush.

From all over the Great Basin they came. Prospectors, promoters, saloon keep-

ers, confidence men, and camp followers. Old-timers who still remembered the strikes at Tintic and the Comstock Lode came, along with young men who thought there would never be another strike. More than a hundred claims were staked the first day, and within a week there wasn't a foot of unclaimed ground within sight of the Black Horse claim.

A city of tents exploded helter-skelter in all directions, for there was little timber for cabins in the Snake Range. For the old-timers there was no time to build cabins anyway, and the young men spent every minute working the claims. Tents were hastily thrown up without plan, a small teepee pitched next to a large wall tent that housed a rough plank-bar saloon, while a half tent-half board building next door served as a general store.

Frank McIntyre staked his San Pedro claim next to Watkins' Black Horse claim, while on its other side was the Mabel claim, located by Fred Schrott and F. C. McFall. Newspapers of the day gave the new camp generous coverage. One Salt Lake City daily reported, "Gold can be traced from Mt. Moriah on the north to Jeff Davis Peak (now Mt. Wheeler) to the south. The Black Horse Mine boasts quartz in which free gold can easily be seen." The San Pedro ledge was described as being "seven feet wide and carrying values of \$400 to the ton, while ore worth less than \$100 is thrown on the waste dump!"

In July, Ely businessman Thomas O'Neill purchased an option on the Black Horse Mine for \$50,000 while the Mines Development Company of Salt Lake City obtained a bond on the San Pedro property for \$75,000. Other promising claims which changed hands for high prices included the Grasshopper, California, Lucky Boy, Cyclone and Buchanan. A Salt Lake City banking firm organized the oddly named Nil Desperandum Company.

The *Mining Review* at Sald Lake City reported, "Affairs at Black Horse are at a fever heat due to the many rich strikes being made." That prophecy was probably the understatement of the year, for only a few days later workmen at the Mabel Mine uncovered the richest gold ore ever found anywhere. The next issue of the *Mining Review* described it. "No part of the Mabel ledge can be found which doesn't show coarse wire gold. Assays show an unbelievable 5,013 ounces of gold

to the ton, \$100,275 to the ton! Armed guards have been hired to prevent high grading, and to keep curiosity seekers from taking samples, the loss of which costs the company thousands of dollars each day!"

Mid-summer saw nine Black Horse business houses in new frame buildings, and it was rumored that Wells Fargo was planning to build a stone bank building. The *White Pine News* at Ely reported, "Until now a scarcity of lumber has handicapped Black Horse's growth, but now this problem has been remedied, for C. E. Hilford has started two new sawmills in the mountains, promising a good supply of cut lumber for the town."

Among the first new buildings erected were Don Clay's San Pedro Club, which advertised "Fine liquors and beer on drought," along with Jim Mihigan's general store, which carried "A complete line of mining tools." The rapidly growing

town was granted a post office on September 17th, 1906. Building lots on main street which had sold for \$50 were bringing \$500, and promoters claimed they would soon sell for \$1,000 each! Other promoters surveyed two new townsites six miles north of Black Horse, naming them Woodlawn and Silver Creek, but they were never serious rivals for Black Horse's fame.

Winters were hard in the barren Snake Range, but even with snow laying deep in the 7,000-foot high gulches miners kept working, and more new strikes were reported. One hundred tons of "mill rock" shipped to the Whitney Mill at Osceola returned its owners \$16,000, while at the Black Horse Mine a body of high grade ore worth a dollar a pound was uncovered. Not to be outdone, the Hamilton brothers claimed they had ore stacked at their Red Chief Mine worth two dollars a pound,

Continued on page 34

*Most of
the Black Horse
Mine's fabulous
gold ore
came from
surface veins
like this one.
Photo courtesy
of author.*





Salome was so dry
her legendary pet frog
carried a canteen and
never learned to swim because
there were no puddles of water.

Salome, Where She Danced

by John Southworth

SLOW down a bit the next time you are tempted to zoom through Salome, Arizona, on your way to or from California. Salome may be just a "wide spot in the road" on U. S. 60 between Blythe, California and Wickenburg, Arizona, but it has a lot to offer the interested traveler who is willing to delay his headlong rush for a brief visit.

First of all, Salome was the home of Dick Wick Hall who started the town in 1906 where he dispensed "Laughing Gas" and his one-sheet *Salome Sun* to weary travelers until his untimely death in 1926. He made his town internationally famous with his desert humor and tall tales about dry frogs that always carried a canteen and could never learn to swim because they could not find sufficient water for that activity. Dick's writings were published as a syndicated column in the Sunday issue of many leading newspapers and the *Saturday Evening Post* published everything he sent them.

His writings made Salome the most

widely-advertised town of its size in the world. One large restaurant is full of Dick's works and the town still advertises "Salome, Where She Danced" although no one knows for sure what Dick really had in mind when he started that one. The lady was real but it is more than just doubtful that she ever danced in Salome.

Salome is in the middle of high and dry McMullen Valley which at one time was somewhat of a mining center. Today cotton is king and continues to do more for Arizona than could the old colonial concept of raiding a mining district for its mineral wealth. Cotton requires a lot of water, which is paradoxical in the light of all the trouble Dick Wick Hall's frogs had with that commodity. I don't know whether or not any of those frogs of his ever studied geology but if they had, they would have hopped on down south of town and sunk a well.

That is precisely what the modern cotton growers did and they have water in abundance. The McMullen Valley drainage collects in a typical desert basin full of porous sand deposits. Beneath its parched surface, the sand is saturated with

water and the excess flows out of the basin over a subsurface low crest of the Harquahala Mountains.

The total underground flow of water is thus brought near to the surface by the natural underground dam. Even the casual visitor can see in his mind's eye exactly how this occurs. Wells abound in the area and some dump their output into open ditches where it flows southward alongside the oiled road into a lower drainage area to be lost forever to the McMullen Valley cotton growers.

As for mining, it is still going on. Silver is a hot property right now and some brand new operations are being opened northeast of Salome. There is also one plant just east of town processing decorative stone products brought in from many locations, some quite distant. But the old time gold producers are the ones that remain interesting. Theirs were the bright flashes that still arouse the spirit.

One of the earliest local mining operators was a Dr. Wilson Walter Jones who, back in pioneer days, located and worked a gold-copper property in Tank Pass on the northwest rim of McMullen Valley.





From 1906 until his death in 1926, Dick Wick Hall brought international fame to the town he founded. He is shown here in front of his "Laughing Gas" service station.

thousands in nuggets and specimens going to "boomers" who rushed the spot before the rightful owners could sufficiently protect it.

After 65 years the stripped area of the Harcuvar Glory Hole, one of the strangest and most interesting mining discoveries ever made in Yuma County, is still visible on a lonesome hillside just north of Tank Pass, the now abandoned western exit to McMullen Valley.

A more interesting and easier to reach old-time producer, in the same general area but southwest of Salome, is the now abandoned Harqua Hala, discovered in 1888 by Bob Stein, Mike Sullivan, and Henry Walton. Those three were down to their last beans at the end of a totally unproductive prospecting trip. Walton, in disgust over such notable lack of success for so long a time, stomped up what is now known as Martin Peak on a trip of his own after the camp chores were done for the night.

Near the top of that raw desert peak a lime-coated rock rested across a palo verde root in a manner to impede his path, water having washed a gully under the root and rock. Walton was impressed by the

weight of the rock as he tried to kick it out of his way and ended up carrying a \$2,000 nugget back to camp. The partners stretched their beans and picked up an additional \$25,000 in raw gold from the open hillside. The three worked the deposit for 30 months, eventually selling their claims when they thought their open pit glory hole was worked out.

In 1891, H. A. Hubbard bought the property and started a shaft. An employee by the name of Dougherty, with little to entertain him in the isolated mining camp and with too much energy to sit still, spent his free time scratching around in the old glory hole.

His words of elation, unlike those of Archimedes, went unrecorded when he came running down the hill wildly waving a piece of fabulously rich gold ore. He had been enlarging a tiny seam and broke into a body of ore which would long be worked as the famous "Castle Garden Stope". The first round of shots after Dougherty's discovery produced over \$4,000 in "showcase" ore. A 25-stamp mill constructed on the site handled ore worth \$1,450,000 produced from that single stope during the next four years. Thus ended the second phase of the Harqua Hala's gaudy life.

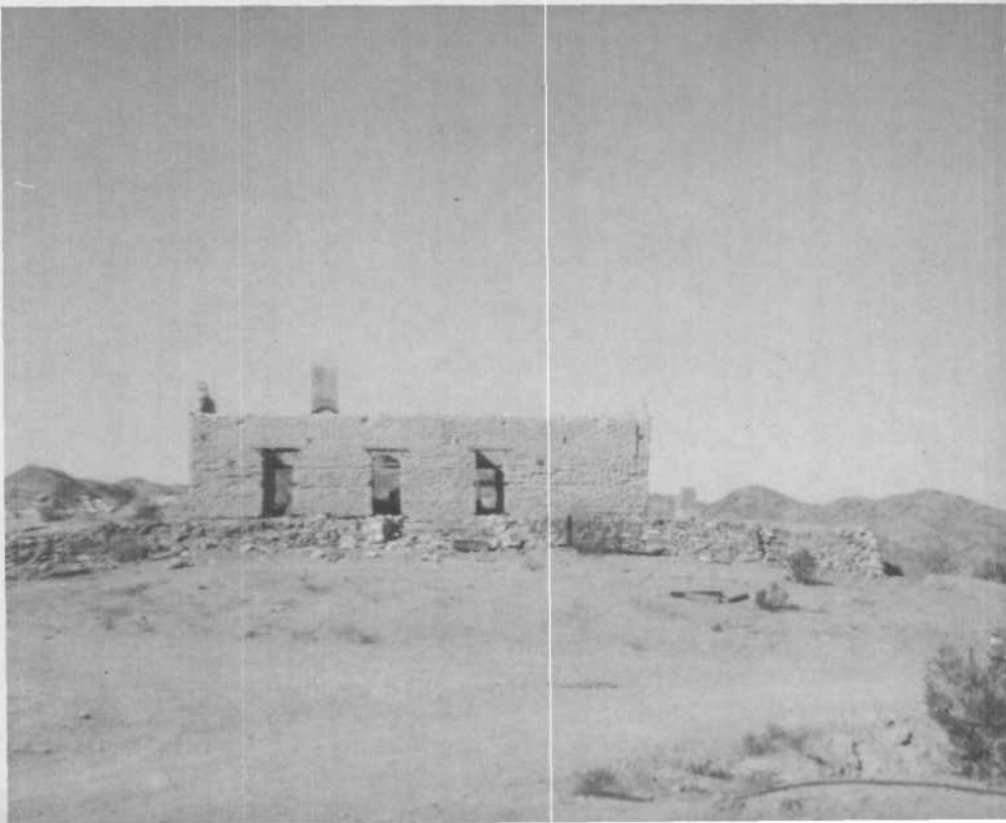
Hubbard sold out to an English syndicate for something over a million dollars, a sum almost identical to the value of

He sank a shaft and shipped ore by steamer from now ghostly La Paz on the east bank of the Colorado River to the smelter at Swansea, Wales. The operation was profitable but did not justify the continued exposure of human life to the constant Indian attacks and was abandoned.

Years later, about 1905, Dick Wick Hall grubstaked one Shorty Alger, an experienced prospector, to check the Tank Pass area. The story he brought back strains the imagination but he had the nugget to prove it. It is difficult to argue with success, no matter how strange the circumstances.

Apparently Shorty slipped while climbing a steep hill, stuck his prospecting pick into the ground to prevent a fall, and in so doing impaled on its point a gold nugget weighing more than half a pound. There was the expected rush to the area, hundreds of claims were staked, and thousands of dollars changed hands buying and selling worthless property.

The first location was the only producer. Shorty Alger had banged into the only exposed corner of an isolated ore body that soon yielded over \$100,000 to him and his partners, with additional



This old adobe building is a relic of the famous Harqua Hala Mine of the 1890s. It is located on what is now called Martin Peak.

the ore which the new owners would extract in seven years of operation. During the "British Period" fine houses, even tennis courts, were built to bring an aura of gracious living to the western scene.

But the Harqua Hala was not finished even after the English pulled out and the bats had taken over for a decade or two. There was still life in the old girl and she gave up another \$76,000 to that same Hubbard, ever the optimist, who in 1920 repurchased the property for about \$7,500.

Today desolation reigns on Martin Peak. A recent sheet metal house, the walls of an oversized adobe structure, mill foundations, a headframe and the usual scrap metal strewn about stand in mute testimony. Unfortunately the quality of the debris is no better than that which one finds around far less notable old producers. Four production phases were all she could muster but that is three better than most of her competitors. Gone are the golden dreams and golden days.

Until very recently one of the curiosities of the Harqua Hala mill site was a very unusual ingot mold in which Hubbard cast his bullion for shipment to the railhead at Phoenix. It was fashioned in a way to make unnecessary any large and heavily armed bullion convoy. It lay abandoned in the sun, unwanted for years, because no other mine produced enough gold to have need for it.

Now, with all Americana bringing fancy prices, it has been picked up for the city trade. So if you should run across a bullion mold which will cast a 400-pound bar of gold, chances are that it belonged to Hubbard and the old Harqua Hala.

Yes, you should linger a while the next time you are near Salome, "Where She Danced." Read the old Dick Wick Hall clippings in the big, old restaurant. Take the only paved road south out of town a few miles to where the water for acres of cotton comes from, and think of Dick's poor, dry frogs.

Where you passed the Sheriff's office on the edge of town, note the well marked Harqua Hala Mine Road taking off to the right hand by a fence and cattle guard. The road is well graded and passes through rich desert country which is beautiful in the springtime or just after one of those infrequent August showers. It is less than 15 miles from Salome to the old Harqua Hala. Visit her. She has been waiting for you for a long time. □

GOLD IN THE SNAKE RANGE!

Continued from page 31

and hired guards to prove it!

The summer of 1907 found the following numbered among the new camp's business houses. There were four stores, Migihan's, Bacon & Courtright's, Rasmussen & Day's, and Fred McQueens. Kixmueller & Koracker operated a restaurant, while Mrs. Bliss offered "Home Cooked Meals". Rockhill & Thurber were mining engineers, W. D. Clay was Justice Of The Peace, and there were three boarding houses. Payne Brothers Wholesale Liquors supplied liquid refreshment for the town's four saloons, the San Pedro Club, Rush & O'Neills, Connor's & Huntsman's, and a place the miners called "the Bucket of Blood," operated by Fred Loper and Hyrum Young.

Until 1907 ore was hauled from the mines to the Whitney and Southern Queen mills at Osceola, but the long haul was difficult, especially during the winter. In January, 1908 stockholders of the Mabel Mine were assessed one cent a share to build a mill at Black Horse, and owners of the San Pedro Mine soon announced they had ordered a twenty stamp mill at a cost of \$55,000.

The new mills were built at Willow Patch, near the San Pedro Mine where never-failing springs promised a dependable water supply. A few of the old-timers had second thoughts about the new mills, for Black Horse's fabulous high grade ore was becoming more like "mill rock" as shafts went deeper, and when the rich ore veins pinched together they were tighter than a parson's purse!

Throughout 1908, promoters with gilt-edged stock certificates kept pushing stock prices higher, and the camp continued its dizzy pace. Then in September, 1908 the Black Horse Company issued 272,000 shares of stock to build still another new mill, and the old-timers began to nod their heads knowingly, for they had seen the same thing in too many other camps. But then, as if to discredit the doubters once and for all, a great new vein of high grade ore was discovered at the Hole Card Mine, and once more the drinks flowed free and easy across the pine plank bars.

Some might say the drinks flowed a little too freely, for the boys from the Hole Card Mine were buying drinks, and

it seems that Scotty Bertie had a few treats too many. Usually Scotty never got into much trouble when he was drinking, but then usually he stayed out of the "Bucket Of Blood!" No one seemed to know afterwards just what started it all, but not long after Shorty entered the saloon he and Fred Loper were arguing hot and heavy. Some say that Scotty reached for his back pocket, maybe for a hide-out gun, but whether he did or not never mattered, for Loper grabbed a six-shooter from behind the bar and fired. As his stunned friends watched, Scotty was hurled backward by the heavy bullet's impact, a gaping hole in the center of his chest!

Before the miners could act, Loper ran out a side door and raced away into the night. The sheriff's office at Ely was quickly notified and Sheriff Alex Baird gathered a posse to follow Loper's trail the next day. Odds at Black Horse were three to one that Loper would be caught, but maybe the odds weren't high enough, for it was a tired and empty-handed posse that straggled back into town a few days later. They had never even caught sight of Loper, and so far as anyone knows, no one else ever did either.

Maybe Scotty's killing cast a shadow of gloom over the camp, or maybe the old-timers had been right all along, but from that time on the town just seemed to die. When the oak and aspens turned color that fall the trail over Sacramento Pass was seldom without a miner leaving for some new diggings he had heard of, where ore veins were more dependable and where winters were easier. Only a few die-hards stuck it out that winter of 1909, and even they agreed that mines "were deep enough" when spring came again.

Today, a poor dirt trail turns north from U. S. 6-50 just west of Baker, Nevada but there is little left to see. Like a meteor in the western sky, Black Horse had soared for awhile, but it was more than just "a flash in the pan." While it lasted it was a real gold rush, probably the last one Nevada had. The miners who joined the mad rush there wouldn't soon forget it, or its \$100,000 a ton ore. And its not likely either that they would ever forget Tom Watkins and his black horse! □

Calendar of Western Events

JANUARY 20 & 21, 8TH ANNUAL ANTIQUE BOTTLE SHOW & SALE, Las Vegas Convention Center. Free tours, overnight parking. Bottles, insulators, ghost town relics. Write Dottie Daugherty, 884 Lulu Ave., Las Vegas, Nevada 89119.

FEBRUARY 9-11, TUCSON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY'S 19th annual show, Tucson Community Center. Collections and lecturers from the world's top museums. Large display of rough and cut diamonds. One of the best gem shows in the world. Write P. O. Box 6363, Tucson, AZ.

FEBRUARY 10 & 11, FIESTA OF GEMS sponsored by American River Gem & Mineral Society, Rancho Cordova (Calif.) Community Center. Write Jos McGuire, 2689 Grove Ave., Sacramento, CA. 95815.

FEBRUARY 10 & 11, 4TH ANNUAL ANTIQUE BOTTLE SHOW & SALE sponsored

by Peninsula Bottle Collectors, San Mateo County Fairgrounds. Write P. O. Box 886, Belmont, CA. 94002.

FEBRUARY 17 & 18, 5th ANNUAL SAN FERNANDO VALLEY GEM FAIR, Devonshire Downs, 18000 Devonshire Blvd., Northridge, Calif. Write P. O. Box 286, Reseda, CA. 91335.

FEBRUARY 17-19, WESTERN WORLD OF GEMS sponsored by the Scottsdale Gem & Mineral Club, Mall Fashion Square, Scottsdale, Arizona. Free parking and admission. Write Eleanor Morrison, 4753 North 33rd Place, Scottsdale, AZ. 85018.

MARCH 2-4, WONDERFUL WORLD OF LAPIDARY sponsored by the Maricopa Lapidary Society, Inc., State Fairgrounds, Phoenix, Ariz. Overnight camper parking. Field trip. Write 10637 Crosby Dr., Sun City, AZ. 85351.

MARCH 2-11, IMPERIAL VALLEY GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY'S 26th annual show, California Mid-Winter Fairgrounds, Imperial, Calif. Field trips to Mexico. Write Ken Skillman, 707 C Street, Brawley, CA. 92227.

MARCH 3 & 4, VENTURA GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY'S 11th annual show, Ventura County Fairgrounds, Ventura, Calif. Write Ed Turner, P. O. Box 405, Santa Paula, CA. 93060.

MARCH 3 & 4, MONROVIA ROCKHOUNDS 14TH ANNUAL GEM & MINERAL SHOW, Masonic Temple, 204 West Foothill Blvd., Monrovia, Calif. Write Jeff Joy, 5526 Dods-worth Ave., Glendora, CA. 91740.

MARCH 10 & 11, SPRING PARADE OF GEMS sponsored by Needles Gem & Mineral Club, High School Gymnasium. Free Admission. Blue agate field trip. Write C. W. Kerr, P. O. Box 762, Needles, CA. 92363.

Desert Life

by Hans Baerwald

After their mother was killed, Photographer Hans Baerwald successfully raised these two little jack rabbits and, when they were big enough to forage for themselves, set them free.



Selected Reading from Desert

ROAD MAP TO CALIFORNIA'S LOST MINES AND BURIED TREASURES and ROADMAP TO CALIFORNIA'S PIONEER TOWNS, GHOST TOWNS AND MINING CAMPS compiled by Varna Enterprises. Both roadmaps are 38" by 25" and scaled. Southern California on one side and Northern California on the other. Both contain detailed location of place names, many of which are not on regular maps. Treasure Map is \$4.00 and Ghost Town Map is \$2.95. When ordering, be certain to state which map, or both.

SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAIN TRAILS by John W. Robinson. Easy one-day and more rugged hiking trips into the historic mountains. The 100 hiking trails are described in detail and illustrated so you will not get lost. Heavy paperback, 257 pages, \$4.95.

OREGON COAST with photos by Ray Atkeson and text by Archie Satterfield. The finest collection of four-color photographs of the magnificent shoreline ever presented. Excellent historic text, paper, 124 pages. \$19.00 until January, 1973. Large 11x14 format, hardcover, heavy slick then \$22.00.

GOLDEN MIRAGES by Philip A. Bailey. Out-of-print for more than 20 years, this was a collector's item. A valuable book for lost mines and buried treasure buffs, it is beautifully written and gives first-hand interviews with old-timers long since passed away. Excellent for research and fascinating for arm-chair readers. Hardcover, illustrated, 353 pages, \$9.95.

TIMBERLINE ANCIENTS with photos by David Muench and text by Darwin Lambert. Bristlecone pines are the oldest living trees on earth. Photographer David Muench brings them to life in all their fascinating forms, and Lambert's prose is like poetry. One of the most beautiful pictorials ever published. An ideal gift. Large 11x14 format, hardcover, heavy slick paper, 128 four-color photographs, 125 pages. \$19.00 until January, 1973, then \$22.00.

DESERT EDITOR

DESERT EDITOR by J. Wilson McKinney. Known by his many friends throughout the West as "Mr. Desert" the late Randall Henderson founded the Desert Magazine 35 years ago and for more than 20 years was editor and publisher. His former business partner and long-time friend, J. Wilson McKinney has written a book about Henderson, Desert Magazine and the growth of Palm Desert since Henderson moved the magazine to the area in 1948. This is a story about a man, his dream, and how he made it a reality. Hardcover, illustrated, 188 pages. \$7.95.

30,000 MILES IN MEXICO by Nell Murbarger. Joyous adventures of a trip by pick-up camper made by two women from Tijuana to Guatemala. Folksy and entertaining, as well as instructive to others who might make the trip. Hardcover, 309 pages, \$6.00.

MINES OF DEATH VALLEY by L. Burr Belden. About fabulous bonanzas, prospectors and lost mines. Paperback. \$1.95.

LET'S GO PROSPECTING by Edward Arthur. Facts and how-to-do-it on prospecting are presented by the author who has spent 30 years searching for gems and minerals in California. For those who think there are no more valuables left in California, they will find a new field in this informative book. Includes marketing data, maps, potential buyers for discoveries. Large 8x10 format, illustrated, heavy paperback, 84 pages, \$3.95.



MOCKEL'S DESERT FLOWER BOOK by Henry and Beverly Mockel. The well-known painter of desert wildflowers has combined his four-color sketches and black and white photographs to describe in detail so the layman can easily identify wildflowers, both large and small. Microscopic detail makes this an outstanding book for identification. Special compressed fiber cover which will not stain. 54 full-color illustrations with 72 life-size drawings and 39 photographs, 316 pages, \$5.95.

DESERT GEM TRAILS by Mary Frances Strong. One of the most popular and authoritative books on the Mojave and Colorado Deserts has been completely revised and updated. Detailed mileage maps, photographs, history, landmarks, etc. make this book tops in its field. Heavy slick paperback, 80 pages, \$2.00.

MY CANYONLANDS by Kent Frost. A vivid account of the early exploration of Utah's Canyonlands by the author who spent his entire life exploring America's new national park and who presently runs a guide service through the scenic country. Hardcover, artist illustrations, 160 pages, \$6.95.

COMMON EDIBLE & USEFUL PLANTS OF THE WEST by Muriel Sweet. A description with artist drawings of edible (and those not to touch) plants along with how Indians and pioneers used them. Paperback, 64 pages, \$1.50.

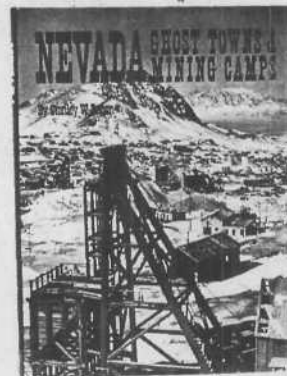
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE HANDBOOK by James T. Crow and Cameron Warren. Packed into this volume is material gathered from actual experience and presented in a detailed manner so it can easily be followed and understood. Highly recommended for anyone interested in back country driving. Paper, illustrated, 96 p, \$2.50.

SUN, SAND AND SOLITUDE by Randall Henderson. For more than 50 years Randall Henderson has traveled across the deserts of the West until today he is known as the voice and prophet of this region of mystery, solitude and beauty. Founder of Desert Magazine in 1931, he has devoted his life to understanding the great outdoors. His second and latest book is a culmination of his experiences, thoughts and philosophy. Hardcover, deluxe format, deckle-edged paper, 16 pages full color, excellent illustrations, \$7.95.

THE MIGHTY SIERRA by Paul Webster. Subtitled "A Portrait of a Mountain World", This is a dramatic story of the geology of the Sierra Nevada and of the people—both of historic and present age—who have lived and died in the mountain world. Includes a special Travel Guide, glossary and bibliography. Seventy 4-color and 90 black and white photographs plus maps and illustrations. Large format, hardcover, 288 pages, \$13.95 until Dec. 31—then \$17.50.

CALIFORNIA by David Muench and Ray Atkeson. Two of the West's greatest color photographers have presented their finest works to create the vibrations of the oceans, lakes, mountains and deserts of California. Their photographic presentations, combined with the moving text of David Toll, makes this a classic in Western Americana. Large 11x14 format, heavy slick paper, hardcover, 200 4-color photographs, 186 pages, \$25.00.

NAVAJO RUGS, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE by Gilbert S. Maxwell. Concerns the history, legends and descriptions of Navajo rugs. Full color photos. Paper, \$2.50.



NEVADA GHOST TOWNS AND MINING CAMPS by Stanley W. Paher. Covering all of Nevada's 17 counties, Paher has documented 575 mining camps, many of which have been erased from the earth. The book contains the greatest and most complete collection of historic photographs of Nevada ever published. This, coupled with his excellent writing and map, creates a book of lasting value. Large 9x11 format, 700 photographs, hardcover, 492 pages, \$15.00.

LOST MINES OF THE GREAT SOUTHWEST by John D. Mitchell. The first of Mitchell's lost mine books is now available after having been out of print for years. Reproduced from the original copy and containing 54 articles based on accounts from people Mitchell interviewed. He spent his entire adult life investigating reports and legends of lost mines and treasures of the Southwest. Hardcover, illustrated, 175 pages, \$7.50.

HELLDORADO by William Breakenridge. One of the most famous law enforcement officers of the Old West describes his life and gives first-hand accounts of the famous outlaws and lawmen he knew. First published in 1928 and long out-of-print, now available. Hardcover, illustrated, 1883 map of Arizona Territory, 255 pages, \$7.50.

Important Notice:

Magazine Gift and Book Shop

GOLD AND SILVER IN THE WEST by T. H. Watkins. The author brings together for the first time the entire story of gold and silver mining in the West. It tells of conquistadores chasing myths in Old Mexico, gold and silver strikes in the West, Alaska, Mexico and Canada, the rise and fall of mining ventures, promotional schemes and today's operations. Hardbound, large format, 212 illustrations (75 in 4-color) 288 pages, \$13.95 until Dec. 31—then \$17.50.

FANTASIES OF GOLD by E. B. Sayles. During his search for archeological finds for more than 30 years, the author was exposed to the rumors and legends of lost gold and treasures. After his retirement as curator of the Arizona State Museum, he classified and delved into these still unsolved mysteries. An interesting and informative book on lost bonanzas and legends, many of which have never been published. Hardcover, well illustrated, 135 pages, \$6.50.

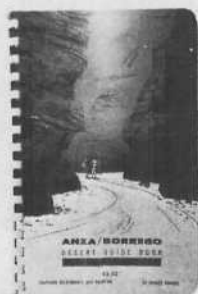
LOST DESERT BONANZAS by Eugene Conrotto. Brief resumes of lost mine articles printed in back issues of DESERT Magazine, by a former editor. Hardcover, 278 pages. \$7.00.

BICYCLE TRAILS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA by David Kurk and Robert Miller. Sixty-nine trails, including sidetrails, ranging from three to fifty miles in both rural and urban areas. Illustrated, maps, terrain description, paperback, 128 pages, \$1.95.

NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA GHOST TOWNS by Stanley W. Paher. Directions to and history about 23 of Arizona's most famous ghost towns. Historical photographs and artist sketches enhance editorial content. Large, 11x14 format, slick paperback, 48 pages, \$2.95.

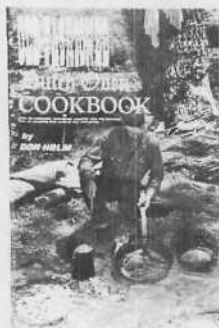
A FIELD GUIDE TO ROCKS AND MINERALS by Frederick H. Pough. Authoritative guide to identification of rocks and minerals. Experts recommend this for all amateurs as one of the best 3rd edition with many new color illustrations. Hardcover. \$5.95.

BARBED WIRE HANDBOOK by Thomas E. Turner. Contains 418 different kinds of barbed wire and associated items, described and illustrated with line drawings. Current value prices. Paperback, 102 pages \$3.95.



ANZA-BORREGO DESERT GUIDE by Horace Parker. Third edition of this well-illustrated and documented book is enlarged considerably. Tops among guidebooks, it is equally recommended for research material in an area that was crossed by Anza, Kit Carson, the Mormon Battalion, '49ers, Railroad Survey parties, Pegleg Smith, the Jackass Mail, Butterfield Stage, and today's adventurous tourists. 139 pages, cardboard cover, \$3.50.

LOST MINES & BURIED TREASURES ALONG THE OLD FRONTIER by John D. Mitchell. The second of Mitchell's books on lost mines which was out-of-print for many years is available again. Many of these appeared in DESERT Magazine years ago and these issues are no longer available. New readers will want to read these. Contains the original map first published with the book and one pinpointing the areas of lost mines. Mitchell's personal research and investigation has gone into the book. Hardcover, 240 pages, \$7.50.



SOURDOUGH COOKBOOK by Don and Myrtle Holm. How to make a sourdough starter and many dozens of sourdough recipes, plus amusing anecdotes by the authors of the popular *Old Fashioned Dutch Oven Cookbook*. A new experience in culinary adventures. Paperback, 136 slick pages, illustrated, \$3.95.

GHOST TOWN BOTTLE PRICE GUIDE by Wes and Ruby Bressie. A new and revised edition of their popular bottle book, first published in 1964. New section on Oriental relics, plus up-to-date values of bottles. Slick, paperback, illustrated, 124 pages, \$2.95.

100 DESERT WILDFLOWERS by Natt Dodge. Each flower is illustrated with a 4-color photograph and described in detail, where found, blooming period, etc. Habitats from sea level to 4,000 feet. Slick paperback, 64 pages, \$2.00.

HOW TO COLLECT ANTIQUE BOTTLES by John C. Tibbitts. A fascinating insight of early America as seen through the eyes of the medicine companies and their advertising almanacs. Excellent book for avid bottle collectors and those just starting. Also includes chapters on collecting, locations and care of bottles. Heavy, slick paperback, well illustrated, 118 pages, \$4.00.

ON DESERT TRAILS by Randall Henderson, founder and publisher of Desert Magazine for 23 years. One of the first good writers to reveal the beauty of the mysterious desert areas. Henderson's experiences, combined with his comments on the desert of yesterday and today, make this a MUST for those who really want to understand the desert. 375 pages, illustrated. Hardcover. \$6.95.

SELDOM SEEN SLIM by Tom Murray. Profiles and vignettes of the colorful "single blanket jackass prospectors" who lived and died as they looked for gold and silver in Death Valley. Slick paperback, exclusive photos of the old-timers, 65 pages, \$3.00.

LOST LEGENDS OF THE WEST by Brad Williams and Choral Pepper. The authors examine the "lore, legends, characters and myths that grew out of the Old West" in a sequel to their popular first book, *The Mysterious West*. Included among the more than 20 "lost legends" are such intriguing subjects as lost bones, lost ladies, lost towns, and lost diamonds. Hardcover, illustrated, 192 pages, \$5.95.

NEW MEXICO PLACE NAMES edited by T. M. Pearce. Lists and gives a concise history of the places, towns, former sites, mountains, mesas, rivers, etc., in New Mexico, including those settled by the early Spaniards. Good for treasure hunters, bottle collectors and history buffs. Paperback, 187 pages with more than 5000 names, \$2.45.

GHOSTS OF THE GLORY TRAIL by Nell Murbarger. A pioneer of the ghost town explorers and writers, Miss Murbarger's followers will be glad to know this book is once again in print. First published in 1956, it is now in its seventh edition. The fast-moving chronicle is a result of personal interviews of old-timers who are no longer here to tell their tales. Hardcover, illustrated, 291 pages, \$7.00.

DESERT OVERVIEW MAPS by Wes Chambers. Using topographic maps as basic underlays, Wes has compiled two excellent detailed maps for back country explorers of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts. Maps show highways, gravel roads, jeep trails plus historic routes and sites, old wells, which are not on modern-day maps, plus ghost towns, Indian sites, etc. Mojave Desert Overview covers from U.S. 395 at Little Lake to Boulder City, Nevada, to Parker Dam to Victorville. Colorado Desert Overview covers from the Mexican border to Joshua Tree National Monument to Banning to the Arizona side of the Colorado. \$3.00 each. Be certain to state which map (or both) when ordering.

ARIZONA



ARIZONA by David Muench. The finest pictorial presentation of the Grand Canyon State ever published. One of the outstanding color photographers of the world, Muench has selected 160 of his 4-color photographs which are augmented by comprehensive text of David Toll. Hardcover, 11x14 format, 200 heavy slick pages. \$25.00.

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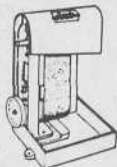


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Rambling on Rocks

by
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and Martha
Vargas

VENTIFACTS:

Nature's Sculpture

WEATHERING and erosion are geology's destructive forces. They are usually found together, and even though it is sometimes difficult to separate them, they are not identical. Weathering is the process that breaks rocks into smaller pieces—erosion is the force that moves the smaller particles to another location.

Wind is one of the forces that usually is both weathering and erosive at the same time. Like moving water, wind is first a force of erosion, and as such becomes a force of weathering. There is a fundamental difference between the action of wind and water, however. Water usually will move particles from the smallest pieces up to quite large sizes, depending upon its velocity. The faster it moves, the larger the particle it can carry.

Wind is seldom capable of moving rock particles larger than sand category, and thus expends its efforts on cutting them. The results of weathering by wind are most easily seen on rocks of fist size or larger.

One of the most interesting products of wind weathering is what is known as a ventifact. The word is from the Latin—*ventium*—wind, and *factum*—something that is made or done; something that is made by the wind.

The wind has, at best, a very small effect on the most solid articles, thus the situation necessary to form ventifacts is somewhat rare. There are a number of requisites before recognizable ventifacts can be produced. First, the most obvious, there must be a wind that blows nearly constantly, and it must be of high velocity.

Second, the wind must be funneled into a more or less constricted area so that its energy is concentrated. Third, there must be available plenty of small particles of sand that can easily be moved by the wind, and there must be larger chunks that can be worn away.

The most logical places for such activities would be within a deep canyon or in a dry river bed at the bottom of a valley. Many of the canyons in the Mojave Desert, especially near Death Valley, are prime locations for this phenomenon. Most of the desert is subjected to frequent winds of medium to high velocity.

One of the finest areas to find ventifacts is in the Whitewater Wash immediately east of Palm Springs, California. Strong winds move down this wash and into the Coachella and Imperial Valleys, especially during the winter and spring months. The wash lies at the bottom of a natural trough, and is strewn with many boulders of granite and granite-like rocks. These are lying in a bed of sand and fine gravel.

In order that a ventifact can be produced, the rock must be composed of layers or portions of different hardnesses. Granite and its relatives are excellent raw materials. The usual mineral makeup of granite is quartz (hardness 7), feldspar



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LONE PINE, CALIFORNIA

(hardness 6), biotite mica (hardness 3), and other minerals in small amounts with hardnesses between those above.

When wind moves across rocks of this type, each mineral is worn away at a different rate; the hardest being worn the least, and thus remaining as lumps or ridges. These protrusions will partially protect some of the softer particles on the leeward side, and the surface will become grooved.



Obviously, the work of the wind is confined to the portion of the rock that lies above the surface, and thus a ventifact can be recognized by the somewhat smooth normal surface on the portion that was buried.

Ventifacts have been carefully studied in order to learn about the behavior of high velocity air currents. The shapes of ventifacts have also been carefully noted, and found to generally fit into three categories. The first, and most simple shape is somewhat like that of a gabled house roof, with one side facing into the wind. This is known as an *einkanter*. The early studies were carried out by German geologists, and the word means one ridge.

The second type is known as a *dreikanter* meaning three ridges. This type is triangular and bounded by three sharp angles or ridges. The first is formed by wind from only one direction, while the second is formed by wind from more than

one direction. The third type is a series of ridges or bands that move across the rock without any definite pattern, following soft and hard layers in the rock. We know of no accepted name for this type.

The formation of any type depends greatly upon the original shape of the rock, and how it lies in relation to the wind. Also, the shape depends upon the minerals of which it is made. If the rock is mostly limestone with only a small amount of hard materials, the surface will be nearly smooth, with a few lumps protruding from it. If the minerals are mostly hard, with only a few soft particles, the surface will be dimpled.

The *einkanter* type is the most difficult to recognize, unless one views it at right angles to the wind direction. It can easily be mistaken for a usual rock. The *dreikanter* is more easily recognized, as a triangular rock is not usual. The ridges across it are also a good guide. The third type is easily recognized as the furrows and alternating ridges are most unusual.

Examples of the third group are usually the most interesting. The surface texture may resemble a fine tapestry or sculpture. The depth of some of the furrows is often surprising, and the steep angle of the walls is unexpected. Some of the ridges are so parallel-sided that they have the appearance of being carved by metal tools.

These surfaces are a real contrast to the semi-smooth flowing surfaces of the *einkanters* or *dreinkanters*. Any type can inspire an artist, depending upon whether he likes conventional or abstract art. Regardless of how the artist leans, most will admit that ventifacts are nature's sculpture in its finest form. ☐

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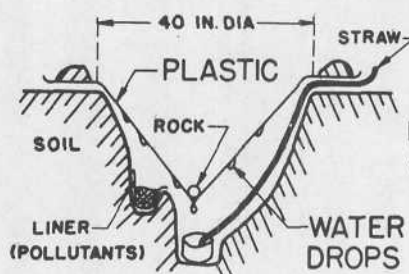
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Letters to the Editor

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope.



A Real Gem . . .

Just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed Glenn Vargas' column on diamonds in the September issue. I am not a rockhound and seldom read his articles—just skin them—but this one was a dilly. Thank you.

AUDREY JUSTICE,
San Diego, Calif.

Recreation Areas . . .

I have been a reader of *Desert Magazine* for years and enjoy it very much.

In your article "Desert Lands for Recreation" in the July 1972 issue you listed 19 Bureau of Land Management areas which were set aside by the Department of the Interior as "prime recreation areas."

I am a rockhound and my family and many others enjoy rock hounding in many of those areas. Does this mean we cannot rockhound in the areas mentioned?

HOWARD PAGE,
Port Angeles, Washington.

Editor's Note: Yes, you can still collect rocks in these areas as you have in the past. However, as I pointed out in the article, you can "at least for the present," according to B.L.M. spokesmen. The basic idea of setting the sites aside as "prime recreation areas" is to insure they will forever remain as public lands and not be traded or sold to private interests. How long these areas will remain open to rock hounding, 4WD explorations, etc., depends on whether they will become "over-used." If we treat the areas with respect, collect only rocks and gem stones in small amounts, and not despoil our deserts, they will remain open for all of us to enjoy. If, on the other hand, they are threatened with destruction by vandals and reckless drivers, then the B.L.M. will have to restrict their use. It is up to us to see that this does not happen. In the meantime, "happy rock hounding."

Rainbow Bridge . . .

My family and I have just purchased our third four-wheel-drive vehicle. We have covered many trails in the Canyonlands National Park and in Colorado. As Easterners we are sad that we have to wait until summer vacation to make our trips out West.

My question is about Rainbow Bridge. Someone told us that there were two persons a number of years ago who went overland to Rainbow Bridge by vehicle, rather than on foot or horseback. Is this possible? If so, we would like to try it . . . or at least part way.

MRS. H. R. MILLER,
Cleveland, Ohio

Editor's Note: I am certain your information was mistaken. There is no way of getting to Rainbow by vehicle, and, frankly, I hope there never will be. As I stated in my article in the May 1972 issue, it is the quietness and pristine wilderness that makes the ride such a thrill. I am a 4WD explorer, but there are some areas of the West that should remain as they were thousands of years ago — The Rainbow Bridge trail is one of them.

Lost Subscriber . . .

I have read through two years of back issues of *Desert Magazine* to deduce your policy with respect to use of dune buggies, trail bikes, and motorcycles on desert lands. As nearly as I can tell, you deplore destruction of desert plants and animals and invasion of private lands. Once you have "wrung your hands in anguish", you seemingly feel free to aid and abet the use of these destructive vehicles.

I could be very wrong, since I am trying to read another man's thoughts, but I must piece together as best I can the basic thrust of the tone of your comments. My personal view is that dune buggies, trail bikes, motorcycles—and while we are at it—snowmobiles should be totally barred from entry to any public lands.

Since I seem to be completely in disagreement with you on this subject, I must ask that you not renew the enclosed subscription to *Desert Magazine*.

ROBERT L. SPEER,
Carmel, California.

Editor's Note: Former Reader Speer evidently missed some issues, such as the November 1971 edition in which we endorsed the B.L.M. multiple-use plan. We have constantly stated it is NOT the vehicle causing the damage, but a few reckless and thoughtless drivers in the vehicle. Most organized back-country vehicle clubs have done far more to clean up the deserts after others than they have done damage. As far as his sweeping ban is concerned, how can the "public" which is composed of private citizens (such as Mr. Speer) be banned from public lands which they own. The solution is not banishment, but education and cooperation among all interested groups.

Death Valley . . .

We enjoyed Mary Frances Strong's article on the Westside of Death Valley in the November issue. We often used to appreciate the solitude of camping at Eagle Borax when it was still designated as an unimproved campground.

Almost every year since our children, now in college, were babies, we have made the trek to Death Valley. Last March, 1972, we went

to Saratoga Springs for the first time. The Park Service had recently chopped down or bulldozed out all the tamarisk trees and they lay in desolate wind-rows around the perimeter of the pools. It was explained on signs, that this was done with the idea of returning the area to the condition it was in before the coming of the white man.

All access roads off the entry road, had been plowed across or mounded over. There was a small parking area S. E. of the springs, but it is not large enough to turn around in if you happen to be towing a trailer. No more camping is allowed in the vicinity.

In the visitors register on the site, comments were invited, and we could not find one favorable word on the changes made in the name of ecology. Certainly, not only man but the many birds and mammals in the area must have enjoyed the shelter of the tamarisk trees. I'm happy to say the pools and pupfish were in good condition and the view was still lovely in the desert sunset.

DOROTHY SUNDBERG,
Lancaster, California.



Alley Oops . . .

While gathering material for an article on the Mother Lode Country for *Desert Magazine*, I came across the above sign in Amador City. I could not find anyone who knew why the alley had such an unusual name. Maybe a *Desert* reader can help.

A. H. WATERMAN,
Arcadia, California.

Coal Washer . . .

Nema Anderson states in the article "Sego, A Wayside Canyon", November 1972, that the first coal washer west of the Mississippi River was built at Sego in 1911.

Bill and Doris Whithorn stated in their book "Photo History of Aldridge" that a coal washer was built at Aldridge in 1894 and was washing 60 cars (100 lbs. each) per day as early as 1896. Aldridge is now a ghost town a few miles north of Gardiner, Montana.

The Whithorns also note that the first coke oven west of the Mississippi River was built at Cokedale, Montana in 1882. This oven and the ruins of 103 newer ones still exist between Bozeman and Livingston, Montana.

IVAN ELLERKAMP,
Bozeman, Montana.

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